United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.1

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee

1st meeting
Thursday, 28 September 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Statement by the Chairperson

The Chairperson: Allow me to extend a warm welcome to all delegations participating in the deliberations of the First Committee at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I look forward to working with all members of the Committee during the next few weeks. We will have much to do, but I am certain that we will be able to conduct our work in a cooperative and efficient manner.

It is indeed a great honour and privilege for my country and for me to have been elected as Chair of this important body. I deeply appreciate the confidence the Committee has placed in me. With the Committee's full support, I hope to guide its work to a successful conclusion at the end of this month. It goes without saying that I will rely greatly upon members' spirit of cooperation and flexibility.

I will also depend very much upon my colleagues in the Bureau, whom the Committee has already elected, namely, our three Vice-Chairpersons — Mr. Andy Rachmianto of Indonesia, Mr. Boštjan Malovrh of Slovenia and Mr. Federico Perazza of Uruguay — and our Rapporteur, Mr. Abdelhamid Gharbi of Tunisia. I am certain that the Committee will be able to benefit from their collective wisdom and expertise in disarmament issues.

I am also confident that the Committee will again receive the full support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, headed by Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka and Mr. Chen Jian, respectively. Last but not least, the Committee will benefit greatly from the presence of our former colleague, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, the new Secretary of the First Committee, and his experienced team in the First Committee secretariat.

Organization of work

The Chairperson: In considering the Committee's work for the sixty-first session, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/61/1, which contains a letter dated 18 September 2006 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly and informing me that the General Assembly, at its 2nd plenary meeting, decided to allocate 16 disarmament and related international security agenda items to the First Committee for its consideration during this session.

Before I proceed to give a more detailed account of the programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/61/CRP.1, I would like to remind the Committee that that document is based upon the tentative programme of work and timetable that was adopted by the Committee on 1 November 2005 as part of the effort to revitalize the work of the General Assembly (see A/C.1/60/PV.23).

Before I go any further, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to a small technical change in the conference room paper. An afternoon meeting was

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originally allocated for 24 October; however, there will be no meeting that day because it is an official United Nations holiday.

The programme of work and timetable itself was prepared in keeping with past practice and taking into account a number of initiatives proposed over the past several years, including in General Assembly decision 52/416 B, on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. In this connection, I also took into account paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, the first sentence of which reads as follows.

> "The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in a sequential manner during the regular session of the General Assembly."

However, Members may have noted from document A/C.1/61/CRP.1 that during the first two days of the second week of the Committee's substantive session, on 9 and 10 October, both morning and afternoon meetings have been allocated to the First Committee, for the general debate, the informal exchange with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and other high United Nations officials and the thematic discussion of disarmament and international security agenda items. This is in line with the agreement reached last year by my predecessor and his counterpart from the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

In accordance with established practice, the First Committee will commence its substantive work on Monday, 2 October 2006. Members may recall that the General Committee recommended that the First Committee conclude its work by 31 October. The Committee will thus have a maximum of 23 meetings to consider the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly. The Committee will also have to consider and take action on its tentative programme of work for the next session under agenda item 110 concerning the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Concerning item 118, "Programme planning", which has been allocated to all the Main Committees and to plenary meetings of the General Assembly, to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports, we will revert to this item if the General Assembly allocates any report under the item to our Committee. Consequently, I will make every effort to complete the work of the Committee as recommended by the General Committee. I therefore strongly appeal for the full cooperation of all delegations on this matter.

I would like to recall that during the sixtieth session, the First Committee had at its disposal a total of 24 meetings, of which it utilized 23, while having to consider a total of 21 disarmament-related agenda items, including the additional item on the question of Antarctica. Consequently, I believe that, with members' cooperation, we will be able to accomplish our task in a timely fashion.

As during previous sessions, the consideration of the items allocated to the First Committee will proceed in three phases, as currently reflected in the proposed programme of work and timetable.

The first phase, general debate on all items, will last from 2 to 9 October, for a total of seven meetings. The rolling list of speakers for this phase is currently open, and I am aware that quite a number of delegations have already inscribed their names on the list. I invite others to do the same as soon as possible. I would also like to remind delegations as they inscribe their names on the list of speakers that the rolling list means that they should make every effort to be prepared to intervene possibly even one meeting sooner than they had originally planned.

Based on the tentative programme of work and timetable that was adopted by the Committee in November last year, as contained in document A/C.1/61/CRP.1, it is my intention to close the list of speakers for the general debate on Tuesday, 3 October, at 6 p.m. Additionally, in order to efficiently use the resources allocated to us, I kindly request delegations to limit their statements to a maximum of 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. Needless to say, it is not mandatory to speak for 10 minutes. In that connection, it is my intention to introduce the use of "traffic lights" for this first phase of our work. In the event the Committee completes its general debate in fewer than the number of meetings allocated to it, I shall propose that we move to the next phase of our work.

The second phase of the Committee's work will be the structured thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all

draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items. For advance information, an indicative timetable based on the established practice of the Committee for the second phase of its work has been circulated to all delegations in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2. This phase will cover the period from the afternoon of Monday, 9 October to Friday, 20 October. A total of 10 meetings, or possibly 11 meetings in the event that we conclude the general debate earlier than planned, have been allocated for that purpose.

As indicated in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2, it is within this second phase that time has been allocated for an exchange of views with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level United Nations officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of the respective organizations and on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session, including the presentation of reports. Furthermore, one meeting will also be used for a panel discussion with independent experts. As in previous years, these events will take place in an informal mode. One meeting, on 20 October, has been kept in reserve in case more time is required for the introduction of draft resolutions or other matters. I plan on providing the Committee with a more detailed explanation of the second phase of the Committee's work during the latter part of next week.

In order to facilitate the Committee's work and to provide sufficient time to delegations for consultations, as well as to give enough time to the Secretariat for the processing of draft resolutions in all official languages, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions will be Wednesday, 11 October, at 6 p.m. I intend to maintain that deadline, and therefore appeal to all delegations to adhere strictly to it.

I would also encourage members to submit their draft resolutions and decisions as early as possible to give delegations enough time to seek the necessary instructions from their capitals and to consult sufficiently, so that the texts finally adopted reflect the greatest possible degree of agreement. Early submission of draft resolutions and decisions would also offer all delegations the opportunity to comment on them during the second phase, which is intended also for that purpose.

In addition, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that might entail programme budget implications as early as possible, to give the Secretariat sufficient time to prepare the necessary statement on programme budget implications. I would like remind delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before it can be acted upon by the General Assembly.

Finally, the third and last phase of the work of the Committee, namely action on all draft resolutions and decisions, will be from Monday, 23 October, to Tuesday, 31 October; a total of six meetings have been set aside for this. Last year, the Committee concluded this final phase in six meetings, adopting 54 draft resolutions and six draft decisions. I urge all delegations to take note of that fact, and I request their full cooperation so that we are able to take action on all draft resolutions and decisions in a timely manner, particularly those with programme budget implications.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure involving the grouping of draft resolutions by clusters, using as a basis the agreed seven clusters mentioned in the letter from the Chairman of the First Committee to the President of the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, pursuant to paragraph 3 of section C of the annex to resolution 58/316, on "Further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". Once again, I shall provide the Committee with specific information on this final phase of the work in due course.

It is my firm belief that, based on the proposed programme of work and timetable that is now before members, the Committee will be able to consider efficiently all the agenda items allocated to it within the available time and to wrap up its work by Tuesday, 31 October 2006. I should like to remind delegations of the need to maintain the necessary spirit of compromise and flexibility in the process of implementing the proposed programme of work and timetable.

May I take it that the proposed draft programme of work and timetable, contained in document A/C.1/61/CRP.1, as orally revised, meets with the approval of the Committee?

It was so decided.

The Chairperson: I should like now to draw attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in decision 34/401, especially its provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply and budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply with the cooperation and assistance of all members of the First Committee.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities allocated to the Committee, I intend with the full cooperation of members to begin the meetings promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and to end at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. respectively.

I would also like to draw attention to agenda item 5 as set out in document A/61/250, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", and also to rule 99 (a) of the rules of procedure, as amended by resolution 56/509 of 8 July 2002, which reads as follows.

> "All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103 shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session".

In view of the aforementioned, I would like to propose that the First Committee, in accordance with that resolution, should consider this item some time in June 2007, about three months before the opening of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The Chairperson: Concerning the submission of draft resolutions, I wish to draw attention to paragraph 28 of document A/61/250, dated 12 September 2006 and entitled "Organization of the sixty-first regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items:, which reads as follows:

> "The General Committee noted and decided to bring to the attention of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General encourages Member States to transmit all draft resolutions and decisions in electronic form as well as on paper ... and wishes to inform the Member States that the submitters are responsible for ensuring that the electronic and paper versions of the draft resolutions and decisions are identical in content."

In this connection, I urge those member States wishing to submit draft resolutions or decisions to the Committee to kindly observe the following procedures. For submission of draft resolutions that are based on pre-existing resolutions, the officially issued version must be used as the base text, with all new text and changes to the old text clearly indicated in bold. Similarly, for revised draft resolutions, the original draft resolution issued on the Official Document System (ODS) must be used as the base text, with all revisions clearly indicated in bold.

Delegations are requested to follow the procedures and to submit a hard copy of the final text together with a diskette or send it via e-mail to the Secretariat for processing. Those delegations wishing to submit a draft resolution or decision are encouraged to contact the secretariat of the Committee for further information and assistance. Additionally, in order to facilitate the process, the secretariat of the Committee will again provide pre-existing resolutions for delegations in the form of a kit, both in hard copy and in electronic form, and has expressed its readiness to assist delegations in this respect.

At this stage, I should like to give the floor to the Secretary of the First Committee to inform the Committee of certain matters pertaining to the proceedings of the Committee.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): At the outset, I would like to stress that the Secretariat reaffirms its commitment to assist delegations in the smooth functioning of the First Committee.

The first piece of information has to do with the kits for draft resolutions and decisions, something that the Chair just referred to. In this connection, I should like to inform delegations that kits with pre-formatted draft resolutions in electronic form are available for sponsoring delegations, together with formatted sponsors lists. Those delegations that have not yet received the kits are encouraged to contact the Secretariat for assistance on this matter. We also stand ready to provide pre-formatted documents for any new draft resolutions or decisions.

I would like to use this opportunity to once again remind delegations that the deadline for the submission

of draft resolutions and decisions is 11 October at 6 p.m. The focal point for receiving all draft texts from delegations is Ms. Christa Giles with the Disarmament and Decolonization Affairs Branch of the Secretariat. Delegations are, once again, kindly requested to use the pre-formatted documents distributed as kits.

I would also like to note that there will be two sponsors lists for each draft resolution or decision. One list will be held by the sponsoring delegation and the other one by the Secretariat. The Secretariat feels that keeping the number of copies of the sponsors lists to a necessary minimum — that is two copies — will best preserve the integrity of the sponsors lists and minimize the possibility of error. All questions regarding lists of sponsors should likewise be addressed to Ms. Christa Giles.

The second piece of information concerns the list of delegations. On that issue, I would also like to kindly remind members to submit to the Secretariat, as soon as possible, the list of their delegations to the First Committee. The cut-off date for the processing of the list is 5 October. Any submission after that cut-off date will be issued in an addendum after the Committee session. There is a form available from the Secretariat, for listing delegations to all of the Main Committees.

Next I will refer to the Committee website. Following up requests from many delegations regarding the updating of the First Committee website, I would like to inform delegations that the website has been updated with information on the Bureau members and the United Nations staff servicing the Committee, including their names, telephone numbers and a short description of their functions. The website is a public site, so for obvious reasons it does not list the e-mail addresses of the Secretariat staff, but we will gladly share our e-mail addresses with interested delegations.

For those delegations not familiar with the main official United Nations website, it may be accessed at www.un.org. To reach the First Committee pages, click on "Main Bodies", then on "General Assembly". At the General Assembly site look for "Main Committees" under "Quick Links", and then for "The Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)".

There has been so much discussion about the First Committee website, so I would like to stress that the website is maintained by the Department of Public Information and follows all pertinent standards of the Organization. It shares the same style and content policy regarding what can and cannot be placed on the site. For example, all official documents of the Committee, both A/C.1/61 and A/C.1/61/L series documents, will be available on the site as soon as they are issued.

As the website is multilingual, delegations will find information in all six official United Nations languages on the respective language pages.

However, due to current restrictions, we cannot put any informal documents on the site. Due to those system-wide policy restrictions placed on the content of the Committee's official website, the Secretariat is currently exploring the possibility of distributing conference room papers and other informal documents through other channels. One option could be to distribute unofficial documents through the un.int password-protected website used by permanent missions.

I would also like to inform members that we are currently exploring a project that would allow delegations in the future to sponsor resolutions electronically through a dedicated password-protected website. That project is currently under construction in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, with the nickname of e-Co-sponsorship. The Secretariat is discussing modalities of involving the First Committee in that project. At this stage it is premature to say whether that feature will be added during the current session.

In the meantime, delegations are encouraged to contact my colleague Mr. Sergei Cherniavsky, who is the focal point for the website, if they have further questions about the website or about accessing Committee documents in electronic format.

The Chairperson: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. You mentioned that document A/C.1/61/CRP.1 had been orally revised. Could you kindly read out the revision?

Also, could the programme of work indicate the date of the Eid al-Fitr holiday, in accordance with the United Nations calendar? Another issue is the structure of the thematic debate. Last year a practice was applied

in terms of the structure of the meetings; will that same structure be applied this year? In other words, are those meetings formal or informal? At the last session, such meetings would start as formal meetings then would shift to an informal setting.

The Chairperson: The only oral revision was that an afternoon meeting was originally scheduled on 24 October. However, there will be no meeting that day since it will be an official United Nations holiday: Eid al-Fitr.

Let me answer the final question by referring to the footnote in the indicative timetable that was distributed as document A/C.1/61/CRP.2. It says that each formal meeting during the thematic discussion will be divided into three segments, in line with last year's practice. The full answer should be in that footnote.

The Chairperson: As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 2 October, at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.2

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee

2nd meeting

Monday, 2 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Introductory statements

The Chairperson: This morning, the First Committee, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, will begin its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Before proceeding with our work, allow me first to make a brief statement in my capacity as the presiding officer of this body.

It is a great honour and privilege to have been elected Chairperson of the First Committee of the General Assembly. I thank members for their support and will spare no efforts to bring our deliberation to a successful conclusion.

This year's session of the First Committee takes place against a background of some urgency. Not much has been achieved in the field of multilateral arms control diplomacy in recent years, but the global and regional security challenges persist. Again we have a window of opportunity to address the important disarmament and non-proliferation issues. I appeal to all members to look actively for common ground and to identify areas of agreement rather than disagreement. Consensus is not a goal in itself, but it is certainly preferable to sustained and chronic gaps between differing security perceptions.

We will not be able to agree on everything, but let us try to agree on more than we have been used to agreeing on over the past few years. Let us listen carefully to each other's statements with the aim of understanding the security concerns of all stakeholders. This is of crucial importance, because the issues at hand are indeed serious. They include nuclear disarmament, production of fissile material for weapons purposes, nuclear-weapon-free zones, security assurances, possible militarization of outer space, compliance and verification proliferation threats, biological weapons, chemical weapons and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That list is not exhaustive. It is up to you, the Member States, to achieve substantive progress. I, as Chairperson, can only facilitate your work.

To facilitate our work in the best possible manner, it is my intention to continue the process of improving the working method of this Committee. I went through the organizational aspects of this year's session last Thursday. Let me on this occasion just reiterate the following. Delegations are encouraged to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication as regards draft resolutions and decisions. I invite members to respect the system of rolling speaker's lists. Interventions should be limited to 10 minutes for national statements and 15 minutes for statements on behalf of regional groups. Even shorter interventions will be most welcome. I intend to start meetings on time. Regional groups are kindly requested to convene their meetings at times that do not conflict with the Committee's proceedings.

We are to embark upon an intergovernmental enterprise, but our ultimate goal is obviously to

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achieve something that will affect civil society positively, so we will listen to civil society, as custom requires. I am working with the Bureau and the Secretariat to organize the civil society input as effectively as possible, and I trust that all delegates of the Committee will participate in this dialogue later in the month.

Finally, colleagues, I am now in your hands. Please feel free to advise me, to make proposals and to involve members of the Bureau in your undertakings, should the need arise. I trust that you will have extensive consultations among yourselves in order to reach agreement on as many resolutions and decisions as possible.

Wherever feasible, let our voice be collective. The late Mahatma Gandhi was born on this very day. With his vision of peace and non-violence in mind, I wish you all the best of luck in your endeavours.

It is now my great pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Tanaka (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I am pleased to address the members of this Committee upon the opening of this session. We begin on a positive note indeed, for today our Chairperson is the first woman to preside over this Committee in its 61-year history. I offer you, Ambassador Juul, my sincere congratulations on your assumption of this heavy responsibility. I also wish to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their appointments and to pledge the fullest cooperation and support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in making this session productive.

Over the last two weeks, speaker after speaker in the General Assembly plenary meetings have offered a gloomy prognosis for international peace and security, while not even half of the statements mentioned the issue of disarmament. This was less than satisfactory, but certainly does reflect the current environment facing disarmament issues. I beg to ask delegates to work harder in their own Governments to raise the priority of disarmament and non-proliferation. But for those who did speak to the subject, their grounds for concern are familiar to us all and relate to various setbacks in the past year, including the lack of significant progress on disarmament, the silence on the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the disappointing climax to the NPT Review Conference and the Review Conference on small arms, failure to comply wit non-proliferation commitments, growing terrori threats, rising military expenditures, new resorts to th threat or use of force, new dangers in the Middle Ea and the Korean peninsula and the persistence unilateral approaches to security.

Yet, we must not let such events blind us to th achievements made during the same period. Last yea the General Assembly adopted a major convention, th International Convention for the Suppression of Acts Nuclear Terrorism. This summer, it adopted the Globa Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which offers a plan action for what the United Nations system should do i the years to come. It invites the Secretary-General t establish a comprehensive database on biologica incidents and notes the importance of his proposal t establish within the United Nations a commo programme of biotechnology stakeholders to reduc terrorist threats and promote the pubic good. Mor States have joined key multilateral disarmament an arms control treaties, and more have signed or ratifie the International Atomic Energy Agency Additiona Protocol.

Over 19 per cent of the world's declared stockpil of approximately 70,000 metric tonnes of chemica agent have been verifiably destroyed, and almos 30 per cent of the 8.6 million chemical munitions an containers covered by the Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC) have now been verifiabl destroyed. The fact that we are able to report th achievements in concrete figures is the direct result o the verification mechanism in that Treaty.

The Conference on Disarmament has conclude this year's session, which was characterized by productive, structured debate on key issues before i with signs of positive developments. I, therefore, regre that the Conference on Disarmament could not adopt report to this session of the General Assembly eve though the report was merely procedural as it failed t reflect more positive events of this year. I urg members of the Conference on Disarmament to mak every effort to build on the developments of the las session, with a view to commencing early substantiv work during the 2007 session.

I wish to also underscore the important role of th United Nations Disarmament Commission in building common, shared understanding of the most immediat threats. I believe that the recommendations adopted b

the Commission on improving its work methods will help it to address its challenges more effectively.

It is important — in all bodies of our disarmament machinery — to remind the world not only of the dangers that threaten us, but also that we are not powerless in the face of them – that practical, positive steps are within our reach. We should be awakened from walking in our sleep. We should build upon these positive steps one by one, small as they may be, in spite of the uphill battle along our path towards disarmament. This is why we have to be practical and realistic and demonstrate the spirit of compromise.

It is not enough for us simply to agonize over the future or to make accusations over who is to blame for the world's persisting threats. Frankly, this will get us nowhere. The First Committee must be more than a forum for reciting policy statements. We must, instead, work together to build bridges over the divisions that remain.

In recent years, the Committee introduced changes in the way it conducts its deliberations. Last year's thematic debate marked an important step forward in improving our methods of work. The Committee must also make a sincere effort to reduce the number of resolutions, while ensuring that they are more concise and action-oriented, with improved follow-up measures. Adopting certain resolutions biennially or triennially would help, as would consolidating others that address common themes.

The Committee will hear from the presiding officials at each of the institutions that comprise the United Nations disarmament machinery, as well as from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the President of the Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Presidents-designate of the forthcoming review conferences of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Chairmen of the Groups of Governmental Experts dealing with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and with verification issues. We will also hear addresses by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as by Hans Blix, the Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission.

The issue of nuclear weapons has been a focus of United Nations deliberations ever since its inception. Despite some cold war reductions, tens of thousands of such weapons still exist, and we also have new, emerging threats from such weapons in the Middle East, South Asia and North-East Asia, while several States are developing long-range missiles to deliver such weapons. The old problem of vertical proliferation is now no longer confined to the five NPT nuclear-weapon States, while the danger of horizontal proliferation persists. Our anxiety about the future of the NPT regime is further fuelled by the impasse on the Korean Peninsula and by our concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions.

I am certain that the world would welcome a further commitment by the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce substantially their holdings of both strategic and non-strategic weapons, under a new treaty to follow the existing ones.

The world would also welcome greater transparency with respect to both the number of weapons and the amount of fissile material held by all States that possess such weapons, as well as clarification of their specific plans to meet their disarmament commitments.

I hope that the Committee will also voice its strong support for the negotiation and timely conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty, while underscoring the urgent need for progress on other issues, such as the weaponization of outer space, negative security assurances, and nuclear disarmament within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Our common task with respect to biological and chemical weapons is to bring their respective treaties closer to universal membership, promote national implementation measures, and secure compliance.

The Chemical Weapons Convention experience is instructive. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has successfully run an action plan on national implementing legislation and a universality action plan since 2003. While the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) lacks a comparable structure of permanent institutions, BWC States parties have endeavoured to comply with their BWC obligations and to build further confidence. I therefore hope that the forthcoming BWC Review Conference will

contribute to enhancing transparency through strengthened confidence-building measures.

Weapons of mass destruction are, understandably, a concern of all States, as are the dangers posed by a wide range of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, landmines, submunitions, artillery rockets and other such weaponry that have been debated throughout the history of this Organization. Actual human casualties suffered by those weapons, particularly in conflict-ridden regions, such as Africa and the Middle East, have been devastating. Those weapons are difficult to control, since many have legitimate defence uses. There are also powerful economic interests that promote the continued production and export of such weaponry, and there is as yet no binding multilateral treaty, apart from the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, to control such commerce, though the gap between the ground reality and the rule of law may change in the years ahead if the proposal for an arms trade treaty moves forward.

The agreement last year on an instrument for the marking and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons marked a significant political step forward in that contentious area. The disappointing outcome of this year's Conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons must not frustrate future progress in that field. Despite its failure to reach agreement on a final document, the Conference was successful in placing the issue of small arms at the forefront of disarmament issues. States across the board reaffirmed their full commitment to the principles, objectives and measures of the Programme of Action, which already includes the convening of biennial meetings to consider its national, regional and global implementation.

But the next step is to tackle the issue of illicit brokering. The Group of Governmental Experts that was established by the General Assembly will commence its work in November to consider steps to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

With respect to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, it is gratifying to note that the Group of Governmental Experts has made some solid and encouraging progress in enlarging the coverage of the reporting geographically, as well as in agreeing on an optional form for reporting data on small arms and light weapons.

I am also very pleased to report that the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures is approaching a new milestone. We are hoping that, by the end of this year, a record number of States will have used that instrument, an achievement that will be all the more significant as global military spending continues to rise.

Next month, at its forthcoming review conference, parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will mark the entry into force of Protocol V dealing with explosive remnants of war. The final success of that vital endeavour is now in States parties' hands and will depend on their ability to achieve further progress in the implementation of the Convention and ensuring its compliance.

I cannot today address in detail all the other items that are on our agenda, but I can assure all members that my Department will continue to assist member States in their work, as best as its limited resources will allow.

No opening statement to the First Committee would be complete without a tribute to the hard work of the many dedicated individuals and groups from civil society on behalf of disarmament and non-proliferation. Though they are underfunded, let us reassure them that their efforts are not underappreciated, for they have accomplished much in performing research, advocating constructive changes in public policy, educating the public, and training future generations in disarmament and non-proliferation.

I would like to thank the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security, including its President, Ann Lakhdhir; Bhaskar Menon, the editor of *Disarmament Times*; and all of their colleagues in civil society who have worked for many years on behalf of virtually all the issues before this Committee.

In closing, please accept my best wishes for an informative and productive session.

Agenda items 82 to 97

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before calling on the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to remind delegations of the agreement to limit their statements to a maximum of 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. In that context, I would like to advise delegations to please pay attention to the "traffic light" on the podium.

Mr. Skogrand (Norway): It is a pleasure to see you, Madam, presiding over this meeting. Your appointment is an honour for the Norwegian Government. Your task is not an easy one. This session of the First Committee takes place against a rather grim and frustrating background.

Not much has been achieved in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in recent years. We failed to agree on a substantive review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May last year. We failed to agree on disarmament and non-proliferation at the United Nations Summit in September last year. We failed to agree on any follow-up of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects just a few months ago. In short, the present international security environment is not particularly conducive to multilateral cooperation in the field of arms control. We shall have to change that.

Supporting arms control measures is not a question of pure idealism. It is not based on an altruistic wish to promote the common good. Actually, it is about self-interest. All countries would be well served by peace, security and stability, regionally as well as globally. Regrettably, lack of mutual trust among members of the international community has slowed progress in recent years.

Despite that difficult background, we cannot surrender to passivity. Last year, Norway initiated cooperation between seven States from all geographic regions. Together, we are trying to pave the way for a global consensus on steps to sustain and strengthen arms control and non-proliferation. We will continue our efforts in connection with the upcoming NPT review cycle.

This session of the First Committee creates new opportunities. As we know, no legally binding decisions or resolutions are to be adopted this year, but it is in our hands to send clear messages that may reverse some of the negative trends we have witnessed in recent years. Allow me to give a few examples.

First, preparations for the next NPT Review Conference will soon start. The General Assembly should be able to agree on the way to proceed. An early agreement on unresolved issues would create new optimism.

Secondly, global stocks of weapons-grade fissile material are in great excess. This session of the First Committee could contribute to efforts towards commencing negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. Such negotiations would supplement national and multilateral efforts to substitute the use of weapons-grade fissile material in the civilian sector with low-enriched uranium.

Thirdly, a new and crucial review conference of the Biological Weapons Convention will be convened later this year. This Committee has the opportunity to send a strong signal to the States parties and the international community that progress in ridding the world of biological weapons should be actively sought.

Fourthly, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a subject matter for this Committee. Small arms may not have the same terrible cataclysmic potential as weapons of mass destruction. Nonetheless, small arms are responsible for the overwhelming number of lives lost in wars around the globe every day. It is my sincere hope that consensus-based progress can be achieved. That would serve to rectify the failure of the Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action just a few months ago.

Time prevents me from addressing all the important issues at this year's session of the First Committee. Let me just emphasize that nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are important themes that should be on our agenda.

I am grateful, Madam, for your ambition to continue the improvement of our working methods. We should enhance our efforts to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition. There can actually be too much of a good thing, and earlier sessions have seen a

large number of competing resolutions. I also support your efforts to better include civil society in our deliberations.

I hope that you will inspire us to be pragmatic and constructive. I am confident that you will enjoy the full cooperation of all delegations present here, and I wish you all the best.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I warmly congratulate you, Madam, and your Bureau on your well-deserved election. Our appreciation also goes to Mr. Choi Young-jin of the Republic of Korea for his prudent stewardship of the Committee during the sixtieth session.

My delegation's position conforms closely with that of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, we would like to add the following points.

The First Committee opens this session against the backdrop of heightened international concern over the expansion of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We are disheartened that the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects failed to deliver an outcome. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was another debacle. The recent record of the Disarmament Commission has been far from satisfactory. The largely hyped 2005 World Summit could not agree on a common agenda for disarmament, non-proliferation or the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Despite the recurring failure of diplomatic efforts, there is broad agreement that the security of the international community is being challenged by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and by the risk that non-State actors could gain access to such weapons. We wish to recall that the greatest threat to human kind comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. It is a matter of grave concern that nuclear-weapon States, instead of disarming, are adding greater precision capability to the existing stockpiles, as well as developing new types of weaponry. Such developments hardly deter, and make the acquisition and use of such weapons much more attractive to terrorists, wreaking havoc for us all.

Bangladesh continues to believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Until that happens, we demand reaffirmation of the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States.

The non-proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remain the cornerstones of the global nuclear proliferation and disarmament regime. We must ensure the full universality of the NPT, the CTBT and other international instruments, without exception.

The NPT process began in 1968 with a huge leap of faith. Signed by almost all countries of the world, it provided a guarantee that the non-nuclear nations would forgo building nuclear weapons and that the nuclear nations would divest themselves of their own nuclear weapons. However, the lack of political will on the part of some has cast a shadow over the prospect of making the world a safer place. It is now imperative to consider practical steps that might be taken to ensure the Treaty's continuing relevance and strength.

We strongly support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Bangladesh continues to believe that a fissile material cut-off treaty is ripe for negotiation.

Bangladesh reiterates its call for the convening of an international conference with the objective of arriving at an agreement on a phased programme that would provide for the elimination of all nuclear weapons; the prohibition of their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use; and their destruction. We also urge the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention.

Bangladesh's disarmament and non-proliferation record is impeccable. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first Annex 2 nation in South Asia to have signed and ratified the CTBT. We are party to almost all disarmament-related treaties, including the NPT, the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have also concluded safeguards agreements with the

International Atomic Energy Agency, including additional protocols.

Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable rights of all States parties to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Those must apply without discrimination. We are disappointed that extraneous reasons are being used by some nuclear-weapon States to deny the rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

We are concerned at the continued development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space.

Bangladesh greatly values regional approaches to nuclear disarmament. Confidence-building measures, such as through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, can contribute significantly to disarmament. We welcome all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, the Middle East and other parts of the world.

The Kathmandu process needs to be followed up to contribute to regional peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. In South Asia, India and Pakistan must relinquish their nuclear option and join the NPT. Israel must do the same in the Middle East. Comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with their additional protocols, have a deterrent effect on nuclear proliferation.

The preponderant focus on weapons of mass destruction should not lessen the attention paid to the regulation and reduction of conventional arms. Rapid and uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons continues to pose serious threats to countries and regions to have a destabilizing effect. Symptomatic treatment and ad hoc solutions cannot yield durable results.

We are concerned at the fact that a huge number of civilians, particularly women and children, still fall victim to anti-personnel mines in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. We call upon those States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We wish to report that Bangladesh has destroyed all its stockpiles of landmines. We urge the international community to provide assistance to landmine clearance operations, as well as to the rehabilitation of the victims.

It is appalling that estimated global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion in 2005 and are projected to keep rising. Most of those expenditures are the result of a frantic arms race that has increasingly negative impacts on our development agenda. We urge all countries, particularly the major military Powers, to divert part of those resources to poverty alleviation in developing countries.

Last year was a great disappointment for the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. We need to move on from that. The trend towards unilateralism and wilful interpretation of multilateral instruments and international law by some must be reversed. The major players in this field need to demonstrate their political will to move forward. It is now time to work for a safer world: a world free of weapons of mass destruction; a world that we hope to be able to bequeath from our generation to the next — a gift of prosperity.

Mr. Shoukry (Egypt): The New Agenda Coalition, on whose behalf I am addressing the Committee, comprises Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand and my own country, Egypt.

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee and offer you our best wishes and full support.

It has been the long-standing tradition of the First Committee that the general debate is launched by Mexico. The delegation of Mexico has graciously decided, this year, to provide the coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition with the opportunity to take its place as an indication of its unequivocal commitment to the objectives and values of that group in promoting the objective of nuclear disarmament. I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation, as well as that of the other members of the coalition, to Mexico, and to reaffirm our solidarity and our resolve to enhance our common objectives for the sake of international peace and security.

There is no doubt that international disarmament efforts have not lived up to our collective aspirations and shared commitments. We have witnessed, for the past few years, a series of setbacks and undesired

outcomes which have impeded progress and prevented much needed achievement. This regrettable impasse, moreover, comes at a time when the international community is witnessing a chain of unprecedented security challenges that merit serious attention and add a pressing need to strengthen cooperation among States. If there was ever a time to demonstrate strong a political will in the field of disarmament, it is now that such spirit and resolve must surface. This current impasse needs to be reversed, and the New Agenda Coalition is determined to play a constructive and helpful role in this much-needed process.

It is our collective belief that the mere existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use not only pose a threat to international peace and security, but also destabilize an already volatile world witnessing profound and unpredictable changes. The need to eliminate nuclear weapons is as pressing as ever, and it is for this reason that the New Agenda Coalition would like to address the following points today.

The Coalition reiterates it firm belief that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of our global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy — constitute an important foundation in maintaining international peace and security. There is a pressing need to see prompt action by nuclear-weapon States to implement their nuclear disarmament commitments, made under article VI of the Treaty, including the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Given the increasing concerns about the lack of implementation of commitments made within the framework of the NPT regime, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to inform member States of the New Agenda Coalition's intention to submit to the First Committee its yearly draft resolution on the acceleration of the implementation of these commitments.

Given the importance we attribute to the NPT, we strongly believe that achieving its universality is essential in promoting international peace and security. We urge the international community to exert all possible effort to achieve this objective, and call upon the three States that are not party to the Treaty to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also call upon that State that has announced its withdrawal from the Treaty to rescind its decision. We also call upon all States parties to the NPT to comply faithfully with their obligations in conformity with articles III and IV of the Treaty. In that regard, we highly value the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in preventing diversions of nuclear material from peaceful uses to use in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices.

There has been a clear tendency in contemporary disarmament discourse to treat nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as if they were two separate, disconnected issues. Attempts to secure advances on non-proliferation while retreating from nuclear disarmament commitments is counterproductive. We believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes and should consequently be dealt with as such.

The Coalition stresses the importance of the full implementation of commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conference. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference adopted a set of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as a resolution on the Middle East, which all need to be realized. The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2000/28) established concrete obligations for States parties to ensure the successful completion of the Treaty's objectives, including the nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. There is no doubt that accelerating the implementation of those commitments would contribute significantly to establishing a much safer world. The New Agenda Coalition is ready to engage with other parties to the Treaty in a constructive dialogue to explore creative methods to realize progress in that regard.

The New Agenda Coalition is looking forward to the commencement of the next NPT review cycle with great determination, hope and optimism. Having in mind previous experiences, some of which were positive and others discouraging, there is a pressing need at this critical stage and time to exert maximum political will to ensure a successful and productive review cycle, which commences in May of next year when the first session of the Preparatory Committee convenes. The New Agenda Coalition will fully cooperate with others during this upcoming preparatory

process. We are prepared to play our part in safeguarding the NPT regime and strengthening it in all its aspects.

The Coalition remains concerned also about plans to research the development of new types and uses of nuclear weapons, including the modification of existing ones. At a time when international efforts are being exerted to downgrade the role of nuclear weapons, reports that some States are in the process of developing new types of nuclear weapons or contemplating lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons have been particularly disturbing. For our part, we will continue to insist on further reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals and will continue to argue that nuclear disarmament measures must incorporate the essential elements of irreversibility, verification and transparency, in order to guarantee the confidence of the international community.

The role of civil society is of the utmost importance in supporting the cause of nuclear disarmament and complements other efforts striving to achieve that end. In this context, we would like to voice our full support for a broad and systematic participation of non-governmental organizations in disarmament that advocate a world free of nuclear weapons.

We are also concerned about the risk of non-State actors gaining access to nuclear weapons. This issue deserves our serious consideration. Despite efforts by the international community, vast amounts of nuclear material worldwide remain susceptible to theft and diversion. There is a pressing need to address the safe use of nuclear material and strengthen international cooperation in this field.

There is only one way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used, and that is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As we have been reminded recently in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission report,

> "So long as any State has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain, there is a risk that they will one day be used, by design or accident. And any such use would be catastrophic."

Nuclear bombs can kill, intimidate and terrorize. They cannot bridge differences, promote dialogue or ensure sustainable development.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Allow me first of all, Madam, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that under your leadership, we will further the work of the Committee in putting forward positive and concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. The Non-Aligned Movement will extend its full support and cooperation in facilitating your task in chairing this sixty-first session of the First Committee.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its longstanding principled position on disarmament and international security, as contained in the final document of the fourteenth Summit of the Movement, held at Havana from 11 to 16 September 2006. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement will circulate the section of this document on disarmament and international security as a working paper of the Committee.

The Non-Aligned Movement continues to be deeply concerned at the current difficult situation in the field of disarmament and international security. The inability of the World Summit last year to address the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), have had a further negative impact on our collective efforts to promote greater world peace and security. We therefore need to intensify our endeavours to resolve the current impasse in the process of achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

Similarly, the failure of the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to agree on a final document was an impediment to our efforts in dealing with this issue. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the tota! validity of the Programme of Action and underlines the need to coordinate efforts in the United Nations with a view to

reaching an agreement on the follow-up of the Programme of Action in order to ensure its full implementation.

In view of this, it is important that all States Members of the United Nations reaffirm their full commitment to the purposes of the United Nations Charter and their obligation strictly to observe its principles as well as the other relevant principles of international law.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the importance of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of all our efforts and negotiations in these areas.

In that context, it is essential to reconvene, at an early date, preferably in 2007, the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session on disarmament, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and on the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. The Movement stresses the need for non-proliferation efforts to be carried out in parallel with efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the existing disarmament machinery should play a central role in addressing our concerns and formulating our responses. The Movement reaffirms the centrality of the First Committee as an essential subsidiary body of the General Assembly in addressing the important issues in the field of disarmament and international security, in particular due to the difficult and complex situation in this field.

While underlining the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, we reiterate our call on the Conference to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery and calls on States Members of the United Nations to display the necessary political will and flexibility to achieve agreement on recommendations based on its two agenda items during the current cycle.

It is most unfortunate that large stocks of nuclear weapons continue to exist and that some nuclear-weapon States are keen to develop even more sophisticated and greater arsenals of such weapons. We believe that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is through the total elimination of such weapons.

The Non-Aligned Movement emphasizes that progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening peace and security and reaffirms that efforts towards nuclear disarmament, global and regional approaches, and confidence-building measures complement one another and should, wherever possible, be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, inter alia, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Movement reiterates that if the objectives of the CTBT were to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to nuclear disarmament would be essential.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the issue of proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means and that measures in that regard should be taken within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the United Nations Charter.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms further that the non-nuclear-weapon States should be effectively assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States as a matter of priority.

The Non-Aligned Movement underlines that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones created by

the relevant nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are positive steps and important measures towards the strengthening of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we welcome the signing of the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty by the five Central Asian countries in Semipalatinsk on 8 September 2006.

The Non-Aligned Movement urges States to conclude agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned with a view to establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist.

The Movement considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament and reiterates its support for the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Pending the establishment of such a zone, the Non-Aligned Movement demands that Israel accede to the NPT without delay and promptly place all of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the need to respect the inalienable right of developing countries to engage in research into and the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. The Movement also emphasizes the responsibility of the developed countries to support the legitimate requirement of developing countries for nuclear energy. The Movement stresses the importance of transparency in pursuing disarmament and non-proliferation objectives and in carrying out related activities, without any discrimination or selectivity, in accordance with the Charter and international law.

Unless the members of the international community come together to make a collective effort to confront the serious challenges before us, our dream of realizing a future that is stable, prosperous for all and free from deadly weapons will remain unfulfilled. We must show greater political will to achieve our common objectives at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. During this session, therefore, the Non-Aligned Movement will present draft resolutions or decisions on the following subjects: measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol; United nations regional centres for peace and disarmament; the relationship between disarmament and development; the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control; promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation; and convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its full support and constructive engagement to all members during the deliberations and negotiations at this session. We need to do our utmost, with enhanced political will, to ensure the advancement of our collective agenda for a peaceful, prosperous and secure world.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the countries that align with this statement.

The European Union is convinced that in a world of global and interconnected challenges and threats, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. The European Union wishes to contribute to the development of a stronger international community, well-functioning international institutions and a rules-based international order. This will entail strengthening the United Nations and equipping it so that it can fulfil its responsibilities and act effectively. The European Union believes that it is important that the work done in the First Committee also contribute to broader objectives set in the United Nations and that the Committee be responsive to relevant decisions of other United Nations bodies.

We will expand on our views in the cluster statements we will deliver during the thematic debate. For the purpose of efficiency and to save time, I will shorten my oral statement today. The full text has been distributed.

The European Union Security Strategy is built on a broad and comprehensive concept of security. This concept is in keeping with the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document's recognition of development, peace and security and human rights as being interlinked and mutually reinforcing. In that document we recorded our agreement that current developments and circumstances require that we urgently build consensus on major threats and challenges. We committed ourselves to translating that consensus into concrete action, including by addressing the root

causes of those threats and challenges, with resolve and determination.

In our view, threat and conflict prevention cannot start too early. We welcome the Secretary-General's progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). The root causes of instability must be addressed with a view to creating lasting solutions, including through efforts to resolve political conflicts by diplomatic means, development assistance, poverty reduction and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

Multilateral treaties and effective verification mechanisms remain essential. Other important elements include national and internationally coordinated export controls; cooperative threat-reduction programmes; ensuring the control and security of sensitive materials, facilities and expertise; political and economic leverage, including trade and assistance agreements; the interdiction of illegal procurement activities, including through the Proliferation Security Initiative; and, as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the Charter.

Peacebuilding is an integral part of the wider security concept. The Peacebuilding Commission brings its own much-needed contribution to United Nations endeavours for peace and security. The EU will work actively to ensure that that new body will have a strong and dynamic role in the United Nations system. In particular, the EU will continue to stress the importance of structurally integrating disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures into the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The events of the past year show that terrorism continues to threaten international peace and security. This threat can be effectively addressed through broad-based cooperation in the framework of the United Nations. The European Union welcomes the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288) as an important instrument and expression of international solidarity in the fight against terrorism. The European Union urges Member States to build on this achievement and to intensify their efforts to reach a speedy consensus on a comprehensive United Nations anti-terrorism convention. We underline the importance of prevention and of conducting the fight against terrorism in accordance with human rights, refugee law and international humanitarian law.

Everything possible must be done to prevent access by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction and other sensitive materials. Terrorist groups have shown that they would not refrain from using the most lethal means.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is potentially the greatest threat to global security, and the spread of missile technology adds a further element of concern. The European Union is guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and further strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements.

Meeting the challenge of proliferation and the risks associated with it constitutes a key element in the EU's external relations policy. The European Union Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction commits the Union to act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its disposal, to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes, which are of concern worldwide.

The EU is convinced that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament provides the best means of countering the threat to international security posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to international security. As specified in its 2003 Common Position on multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation, the EU supports the universal ratification of, and adherence to, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, as well as the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Those key instruments provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. They contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, and to the fight against terrorism.

The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as vital as ever. We continue to defend that consensus on the basis of the framework established by the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), by supporting the Decisions and Resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the final document of the 2000 Review Conference, and shall bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report, which includes the programme of work adopted by consensus at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process in which the European Union will engage.

The European Union stands by its Common Position, agreed on 25 April 2005, related to the NPT Review Conference. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on those States not yet Party to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. The European Union considers that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification standard and are an essential means for States parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under the NPT.

In this year of the 50th anniversary of the approval of the IAEA Statute, the European Union reaffirms its full support for the work of that unique and indispensable organization. We support strengthening the role of the United Nations Security Council as final arbiter of international peace and security, in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

The European Union is looking forward to the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the next NPT Review Conference in 2007, which should take place in Vienna. We are committed to contributing actively to a successful outcome of that meeting. In our view, the next NPT review cycle will have to produce tangible results that build on all three pillars of the NPT in order to reinforce the regime.

However, that essential regime is under pressure from the challenges posed by the question of Iran's nuclear programme and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-declared possession of nuclear weapons.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1696 (2006) and calls upon Iran to respond positively and swiftly to the demands of the international community in implementing the resolution, in particular by suspending its enrichment activities in accordance with the resolution.

The European Union urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon and completely dismantle any nuclear weapons-related programme in a prompt, transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The European Union attaches clear priority to the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) — a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — as a means to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation. That was made clear in the Common Position adopted by the European Union related to the NPT Review Conference on 25 April 2005, and by which the European Union stands. We are ready to promote the FMCT and support the start of FMCT negotiations in spring 2007.

The European Union stresses the need to continue, with determination to strengthen action in countering the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition. Those weapons have become real everyday weapons of mass destruction. We have committed ourselves to tackling the problem through the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That undertaking was confirmed at the highest level during the World Summit last year.

The European Union is deeply disappointed that the United Nations Review Conference on the Programme of Action was unable to agree on an outcome document. Notwithstanding this, we recognize the value of the Conference in reaffirming our commitment to the principles, measures and objectives of the Programme of Action.

In a new positive development, the European Union welcomes the growing support, in all parts of the world, for an international arms trade treaty to establish common standards for the global trade in conventional arms, as a comprehensive instrument based on universally accepted norms and standards. The start of a comprehensive process to that end at the earliest opportunity at the United Nations is called for and the draft resolution under discussion provides the basis for that. Binding standards, consistent with the existing responsibilities of States under relevant

international law, would be critical in tackling conventional arms proliferation, which is undesirable and irresponsible and which undermines peace, security, development and full respect for human rights in some of the most vulnerable parts of the world. The European Union invites other States and regions to engage in the discussion and to agree on the start of a United Nations-based process to take forward action in that area.

As mentioned, the full text of this statement is available in written form. Please be assured of our full support during the Conference.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Madam, upon your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Mexico fully supports the statement just made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Coalition of the New Agenda. We thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words addressed to my delegation. On this occasion, I would like to refer to matters of particular interest for my Government. I shall not read my full text, which will be available later on.

The current situation appears to be characterized by the constant threat of an imbalance between, on the one hand, actions taken to achieve disarmament objectives and on the other hand, those taken in order to fight terrorism and non-proliferation. In particular, with regard to the last two issues, the fight against the scourge of terrorism tends to favour horizontal non-proliferation strategies.

My country deplores the fact that we have been unable to halt the trend of ongoing failures in the negotiations on disarmament. We hoped that after the frustration of 2005, we would be able to take a new direction in 2006. Yet, our hopes were dashed once again. The Conference on Disarmament was unable to adopt a programme that would allow it to resume its substantive negotiations. Regrettably, even in the area of small arms and light weapons, the Small Arms Review Conference, which took place here a few months ago, was unable to achieve results owing to the opposition of one delegation.

That last situation was particularly disappointing for the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean. Those countries met together in Antigua, Guatemala, in May of this year, and sought to complement the Programme of Action at the Review Conference, by adopting measures to regulate brokering activities in the area of small arms and light weapons. We also sought to support the adoption of an internationally legally binding instrument on illicit arms brokering.

Furthermore, we are concerned by the lack of regulation of the possession by civilians of small arms, the laxity in the regulation of ammunitions and, above all, by the transfer of weapons to non-State actors. My delegation is fully committed to those objectives, agreed at a regional level and clearly reflected in the Antigua Declaration. In this regard, we believe that the initiative launched by Costa Rica and other countries in support of an arms trade treaty can become a very valuable instrument.

The unacceptable paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament has caused us to seek alternatives that would allow us to progress with that agenda. Our ideas have not always been welcomed by those who did not wish to make progress and who, indeed, have impeded progress in other forums. We have heard their objections, but what we have not heard are their proposals for breaking this stalemate. We still believe that owing to its universal composition and its working methods, the General Assembly is the body that can take on those responsibilities that other bodies have been unable to take on owing to a lack of political will and the abuse of the rule of consensus, which has turned into a real form of veto. The initiative that we presented last year in this forum remains valid, especially in light of the events of the 2006 Conference on Disarmament. We shall continue our consultations on this matter.

My country has taken note with interest of certain proposals that were introduced during the Conference on Disarmament, and we have indicated our flexibility. The best example is our readiness to start work on a treaty banning fissile material, using the mandate and the draft instrument presented for the consideration of the Conference this summer as a starting point, regardless of their shortcomings. We wish to be constructive, and we would expect that others will be equally open-minded to work on issues that are priority issues for the majority, such as nuclear disarmament. We express our hope that 2007 will be a year of true progress and not merely a repetition of what happened in 2006. If the current situation persists, the Conference will continue to lose credibility and it will

be necessary to find alternatives that will enable us to make progress in those areas where that forum is unsuccessful.

We shall soon begin another cycle in the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a fundamental instrument for the international security system. As was stated by the Minister for Energy of Mexico just a few weeks ago at the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, my Government firmly supports Austria's proposal to hold the first sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Treaty in Vienna during the first semester of 2007. Mexico considers that such a venue would enhance the strong link between the Treaty and the Agency. We hope also that during this first session we shall be able to lay the foundation to ensure that this Treaty, the keystone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, will emerge further strengthened at the end of this process. In order to achieve that objective, we must focus our efforts on the rights, duties and compliance with the obligations enshrined in the three pillars of the Treaty: the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the obligation not to acquire or transfer nuclear weapons and the obligation to reduce nuclear stockpiles in order to achieve nuclear disarmament. These are fundamental legally binding commitments that must be addressed in the same manner.

In addition to the provisions of the Treaty, there are further agreements that were reached by consensus in the review conferences. These include the decision on the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament that was part of the compromise that allowed for the open-ended extension of the Treaty in 1995. That decision laid down the conditions for the establishment of agreements on nuclear supplies, including the acceptance of legally binding agreements not to acquire nuclear weapons. In this regard, Mexico is closely following developments such as the conclusion of nuclear cooperation agreements with non-party States to the Treaty. Not respecting the basic principles agreed upon also erodes the non-proliferation regime that we have been painstakingly building over the past few decades.

In this regard, Mexico is undertaking actions aimed towards eradicating the nuclear threat, including the possible diversion of nuclear material and technology for non-peaceful ends as well as the possibility of terrorists making use of weapons of mass destruction, threatening the security of our nations. On 8 July 2006, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice with regard to the obligation to undertake and conclude negotiations in good faith to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls. This is a legal obligation that must be speedily fulfilled. My country emphasizes that without effective disarmament our efforts in the area of non-proliferation will be seriously undermined.

At the conclusion of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States unequivocally committed themselves to the total destruction of their stockpiles. It is a matter of concern to my delegation that this objective has not been met and that those States have denied or ignored that commitment. Once again, we call upon the nuclear-weapon States, several of which are depositaries of the Treaty, to keep their word and to speed up the work to implement the 13 practical measures for nuclear disarmament agreed upon in 2000.

In accordance with the commitments made, there should be firm steps towards nuclear disarmament. But on the contrary, we note with deep concern that nuclear weapons continue to be part of strategic doctrines and that the development of new, more sophisticated types of nuclear weapons is even being considered. It is also troublesome that today there is no single legally binding instrument that satisfactorily regulates the question of missiles.

My Government welcomed the report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, headed by Dr. Hans Blix, emphasizing that nuclear weapons must never be used. The recommendations adopted by consensus by its members are a valuable contribution that will stimulate the debate on disarmament and will guide the actions of States in this matter. In this regard, we welcome the invitation extended by the chair to Dr. Blix to participate in a panel of independent experts on 16 October during our thematic debate.

The tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a good opportunity to call once again on States that have not ratified that Treaty, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, to do so without delay. In this regard, my Government welcomes the recent ratification by Vietnam.

My delegation will continue to work in a constructive manner in this Committee in order to achieve its objectives, and we shall support the chair in its efforts to achieve the success of our endeavours.

The Chairperson: I now call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Argentina, to congratulate you for your election to chair this Committee. We feel that the selection of a woman to chair this important Committee will contribute to strengthening the awareness of a gender perspective on these issues and throughout our Organization. We extend our congratulations to the other members of the bureau. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Tanaka, and wish him success in the fulfilment of his duties.

The distinguished delegation of Brazil will make a statement on behalf of Mercosur and its associated States during the thematic debate. We fully share those statements. For the sake of briefness, I shall limit myself to the foliowing comments. The adaptation and redefinition of the United Nations and the regional structures to the new international context requires, in our opinion, effective multilateral dialogue. In the field of disarmament and international security, we face a situation of paralysis of the so-called disarmament machinery that cannot continue. The delegation of Argentine calls upon all delegations to establish a frank dialogue, adopting a pragmatic approach in order to give an answer to new challenges.

In the field of weapons of mass destruction, we continue to promote actively the universalization and strengthening of existing legally-binding disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, with a view to strengthening the basis of shared security. At the same time, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime should be accompanied with the access to technology by States that fully comply with their international obligations.

On the other hand, the excessive stockpiling of conventional weapons and, in particular, of small arms is both a result of tensions or conflicts. It is also a cause of worsening or persistent conflicts and contributed to high rates of crime and causing deaths among innocent civilians, particularly, among the most vulnerable segments of society.

We welcome the results achieved this year by the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. There is no doubt regarding the relevance of this confidence-building measure for increasing transparency at the global level.

At the same time, we cannot refrain from expressing our frustration at the lack of results achieved during the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference. We hope that we will be able to redirect these efforts in the near future.

During the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Argentina took the initiative of introducing a draft resolution entitled "Information on Confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". We did so convinced that dialogue and mutual understanding are the basis for generating the necessary political will.

After the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 59/92 and 60/82, without a vote and with a large number of sponsors, and following the establishment of a database in the Department for Disarmament Affairs, we believe that we are in a position to contribute to the effectiveness of this Committee's work and to proceed to the biennialization of this resolution. Once again, we are grateful for all the expressions of co-sponsorship that had been received, and once again we invite all delegations to support this initiative.

Madam, before concluding, we wish to express our acknowledgment of and gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador Choi of the Republic of Korea, for his excellent performance and leadership.

Madam, know that you can count on our full support and the full cooperation of our delegation to make this session of our Committee as fruitful as we all desire.

Mr. Cheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam, at the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of this session of the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Under your able leadership, the current session of the Committee is sure to be crowned with success.

Over the past year since the last session of the Committee, the international security situation has not been tranquil. Developments of international and

regional situations have been affected by frequent regional conflicts and the complicated hotspot issues. However, peace, development and cooperation are still the common aspirations of the international community. During this important historical period, in which opportunities and challenges go hand in hand, it is imperative for all States to foster a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. We should strive to build a harmonious world by upholding multilateralism and pursuing a win-win approach, where countries coexist in amity politically, conduct mutually beneficial economic cooperation on an equal footing, trust one another, coordinate closely on security matters and complement each other culturally.

Since the beginning of this year, regional non-proliferation issues have been very prominent. The diplomatic process to resolve these issues has experienced twists and turns and is faced with great difficulty. At the same time, double standards and opportunism remain unabated. The international non-proliferation regime is in danger of being further weakened. In the current situation, it has become an important and urgent issue for the international community to strike a balance between non-proliferation, on the one hand, and maintenance of regional peace and stability, the legitimate security concerns for countries involved and the right to peaceful uses, on the other. In this regard, China would like to put forward the following proposals.

First, a comprehensive approach should be adopted in addressing both the symptoms and the root causes of proliferation problems. No international non-proliferation efforts should deviate from the fundamental objective of maintaining and promoting regional and international peace and stability.

Secondly, parties concerned should commit themselves to the normalization of their relationships through consultation and on the basis of mutual respect, which will greatly contribute to achieving non-proliferation goals and promoting peace and stability.

Thirdly, the approach of dialogue and negotiations should be further pursued. Resorting to sanctions or exerting pressure will not resolve problems at the root and can lead to the escalation of crises with resulting negative effects.

Fourthly, the impartiality and non-discriminatory nature of international non-proliferation efforts should be ensured and the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful uses of science and technology should be properly managed in a balanced manner.

Fifthly, effective measures should be taken to safeguard the international non-proliferation regime. The international community should, through discussions with broad participation, advance with the times and build up a large consensus so as to consolidate and reinforce multilateral mechanisms.

On the Korean peninsula nuclear issue, China is committed to maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula, making the peninsula free of nuclear weapons, and promoting the six-party talks. It has been proved that the six-party talks remain an effective mechanism for enhancing understanding and trust and resolving the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. We hope the parties concerned will work together to expand common ground, and meet each other halfway in a cool-headed manner and with greater flexibility, with a view to the early resumption of the six-party talks and a gradual implementation of the joint statement issued during the fourth round of the six-party talks. This is the only viable solution to the Korean peninsula nuclear issue.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, China supports the efforts to safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and is opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while standing for the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East and a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiations. While entitled to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, all States should honour their treaty obligations and commitments. The priority at this very moment is to keep up serious dialogue between Iran and the European Union-3 so as to resume talks at an early date. China hopes that the parties involved will show more flexibility, remain calm and patient, and stay committed to the right cause of pursuing peaceful solutions. That will create favourable conditions for bringing the Iranian nuclear issue back on to the track of negotiations. China will continue to play a constructive role in this process.

Multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms are an important component of the current international security system.

They play an essential role in maintaining world peace and stability and promoting the common development of all States. However, it is regrettable that, over the past year, the multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process has been beset with great difficulties. Despite some progress, the work of relevant multilateral institutions is still lacks momentum.

Under the new circumstances, it serves the common interests of all States to constantly promote the sound development of a multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, which is also the common responsibility of all States. China believes that the international community should focus its efforts on the following aspects.

First, it should be dedicated to preserving global strategic stability and realizing the common security of all States, so as to remove the root cause of the danger to peace and stability. The role of nuclear weapons in national security should be reduced and a nuclear disarmament position should constantly be promoted. An international legal instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear weapons States should be negotiated and considered at an early date. Preventive and effect measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an armed race in outer space. An appropriate international legal instrument should be negotiated and concluded so as to ensure the peaceful use of outer space.

Secondly, the international community should be committed to preserving and asserting international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. Currently, it is imperative to enhance the authority, the universality and effectiveness of such arms control and non-proliferation treaties as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, to promote the early entering into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and to take concrete measures to reinforce the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system.

Thirdly, the traditional multilateral arms control and disarmament institutions should be revitalized. The Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission have always been important platforms for promoting multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts. In the light of the new situation and the new tasks, effective measures should be taken to break the deadlocks in the relevant institutions and thus reinvigorate them so that they can play their appropriate roles. At the same time, it is important to adhere to the principle of consensus in order to guarantee the fairness, coherence and universality of multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts.

Fourthly, the international community should take a people-oriented approach in addressing humanitarian problems related to arms control. The implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols should be further promoted, and their universality and effectiveness should be enhanced. In addition, the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms remains an urgent task of the international community. Measures should be taken to ensure its effective implementation.

Fifthly, there is a need for enhanced capacity-building in combating new threats such as nuclear terrorism.

As an architect and advocate of and a participant in the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regime, China, in a highly responsible manner, has always taken concrete measures aimed at supporting multilateralism and promoting the cause of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never failed to shoulder its responsibilities and obligations in the area of international nuclear disarmament. China has always supported the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons and has refrained from engaging in a nuclear arms race, instead contributing to international nuclear disarmament. China has always actively promoted international efforts to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space.

China firmly opposes the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and participates actively in international non-proliferation efforts. We actively support and participate in the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). In July 2006, China, in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the European Union and the Governments of Australia, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom, successfully hosted an international workshop in Beijing — the first of its

kind — on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the Asia-Pacific region.

China resolutely follows the path of peaceful development. It has always put its own development at the service of the collective progress of humanity, making its development both an end and a means in the maintenance of world peace. On the basis of that fundamental national policy, China will continue to participate extensively in and actively promote the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, moving forward hand in hand with peoples throughout the world in their tireless efforts to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and shared prosperity.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the Committee and to assure you of my delegation's full support in carrying out your work.

The First Committee is the main forum for discussions on arms control and disarmament. To that end, and in order to facilitate a substantive exchange of views, we welcome the continued implementation of the measures adopted in 2004 to improve the effectiveness and productivity of our work.

We note that the international forums for arms control and disarmament negotiations remain generally at an impasse. Those deadlocks result not from the existing structures, but from a lack of will on the part of States to enter into negotiations. The differing interests and priorities of States are particularly obvious within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Nevertheless, and thanks to the 2006 initiative of the six Presidents of the Conference, the Conference now seems to be back on the right track. Coordination among the Presidents has enabled us to organize structured and thematic debates on all the agenda items of the Conference. We are particularly pleased with the debate on the negotiations on cutting off the production of fissile material for military purposes. We believe that negotiations must begin on that issue without delay or preconditions, taking into account the interests of all Conference members.

Switzerland, which will assume a presidency of the Conference in 2007, strongly supports coordinating the work of the next six Presidents. We will make every effort to consolidate the progress made in 2006. However, it should be noted that the search for consensus in the multilateral context depends largely on regional developments and on the success of international diplomacy.

Nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and cooperation are at the heart of my country's concerns. In that connection, we should like to highlight three subjects in particular.

First, developments related to the Iranian nuclear issue continue to hold our full attention. Switzerland remains convinced that the contentious aspects of the Iranian nuclear issue can and must be resolved through the path of diplomacy. Switzerland therefore calls on the parties concerned to come to the negotiating table as swiftly as possible to avoid an escalation whose consequences would affect everyone.

Secondly, although hopes arose in 2005 that substantive negotiations might begin on the nuclear issue involving the Korean peninsula, new concerns have arisen because of the rumours about the possibility of a nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, Switzerland calls on all parties engaged in the Six-Party Talks process to display a spirit of consensus that will enable it to resume. We also call on the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to rejoin the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Thirdly, the planned initiative on nuclear cooperation between India and the United States raises fundamental questions about the future of the nuclear non-proliferation system based on the NPT. Moreover, this plan to deregulate nuclear cooperation stands in stark contrast to recently proposed measures that are even more restrictive with regard to access to "sensitive" nuclear technologies. Switzerland is of the view that the right to engage in cooperation and to gain access to sensitive technologies remains dependent on adherence to the NPT and on strict application of all its provisions.

This year, a review conference in an area of interest to the Committee has already been held, and two others will take place immediately following after our deliberations: the first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Sixth Review

Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Switzerland is convinced that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an achievement of fundamental importance. Despite the failure of the Review Conference in July, it is the only United Nations document that contains a comprehensive catalogue of measures to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It is also the only document to have been accepted by all United Nations Member States. Switzerland supports the global follow-up process and considers it imperative that a biennial meeting be held in 2008.

My country is also committed to giving greater consideration to the negative effects of armed violence on development. In particular, it is important that the consensus expressed at last year's World Summit regarding the links among security, peace, human rights and development be reflected in joint international efforts. That is why Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme took the initiative to convene a ministerial summit on armed violence and development, on 7 June in Geneva. At the close of the summit, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development was adopted by the 42 States present.

Biological weapons are a subject of grave concern for my country. Knowledge and technology in the field of biotechnology and genetic science are developing swiftly in both the civilian and the military arenas; hence, the risks of abuse are constantly increasing. We appeal to all Member States to find common ground during the Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which will take place this fall in Geneva. In particular, we wish to see the establishment of a follow-up process to strengthen compliance with the Convention.

Regarding the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Switzerland supports efforts to conclude the discussions on mines other than antipersonnel mines by means of a legal instrument which would better protect civilian populations against these terrible weapons. Likewise, it expects the Review Conference to work to find solutions to the grave humanitarian problems caused by submunitions.

The second Review Conference on the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will be held in 2008. Switzerland welcomes the progress made since its entry into force and is confident that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will be able to continue its work unimpeded. Nevertheless, major challenges remain. In particular, stocks of residual chemical weapons not only pose an ongoing threat to the environment and to peoples, but also represent a possible supply source, in particular for terrorist groups. Switzerland therefore calls on all countries that possess such weapons to do everything in their power to destroy all their stocks of chemical weapons within the time frame envisaged in the Convention.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the fact that Switzerland actively supports the effective control of the international trade in conventional weapons on the basis of globally applicable criteria. This is why it favours a harmonization of the rules applying to the arms trade by means of an internationally binding legal instrument such as the arms trade treaty proposed by the United Kingdom and other countries in the draft resolution. We are convinced that the United Nations is the perfect framework for such work.

Switzerland has for a long time been particularly interested in the question of transparency in armaments, because this is an important factor in the framework of confidence and security between States. My country took part in the Group of Governmental Experts established by resolution 60/226, which was charged with reviewing the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Switzerland welcomes the fact that the Group was able to reach a consensus on recommendations designed not only to improve the operation of the Register but also to increase its relevance.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Madam Chairperson, allow me first of all to express my satisfaction at seeing you, Ambassador Mona Juul, presiding over the First Committee. Rest assured of the full cooperation of the delegation of Brazil in the course of our deliberations.

As President Lula da Silva stated at the opening of this session of the General Assembly:

> "There is no more effective way [than multilateralism] to bring States together, to keep the peace, to protect human rights, to promote sustainable development and to work out negotiated solutions to common problems." (*See A/61/PV.10*)

Brazil is committed to multilateralism across the full spectrum of international relations, not least in the area of peace and security. Multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and established practices of international law, provide the only sustainable method of addressing international security issues. The need for effective collective measures in order to re-establish confidence and settle international disputes is more pressing than ever at a time when regional tensions continue to escalate, conflicts remain a daily reality, and civilian populations continue to suffer mounting casualties.

It is both unfortunate and worrisome that today we are witnessing a continuing erosion of multilateralism and that recent events have demonstrated an increasing tendency towards unilaterally imposed measures. Another disquieting trend is Security Council encroachment on General Assembly competences with respect to issues relating to international peace and security. Measures under Chapter VII of the Charter should not be used indiscriminately. Yet another such trend is the non-fulfilment of commitments and obligations assumed under the relevant international legally binding instruments, especially with respect to weapons of mass destruction.

The Government of Brazil fully concurs with the assessment that terrorism and prospects of the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are prominent among contemporary threats to international peace and security. One of the most terrifying possibilities is, indeed, that non-State actors might acquire and use such weapons. We must endeavour to prevent such a scenario from ever becoming reality, while acting strictly within accepted principles and norms of international law.

The threat of terrorism only adds to the urgency of nuclear disarmament, which must remain the highest priority in the field of weapons of mass destruction. In this area, as in any other, setting an example can only strengthen one's argument. The only real guarantee against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is their total elimination.

In the wake of the lack of any substantive results by the seventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year, much thought has been given to finding ways forward. Nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT should realize that the impasse at the Review Conference was, to a large extent, due to the perception that there has not been any sign of real resolve to eliminate existing nuclear arsenals. The Treaty has been in force for nearly 40 years; the cold war has, thankfully, long been over, yet the nuclear disarmament commitment that the nuclear-weapon States parties undertook under article VI has yet to be implemented.

In that respect, we lend our full support to the position expressed earlier today by the head of the Egyptian delegation on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and reiterate our readiness to work together actively in order to attain the strongest possible outcome on nuclear disarmament in the next NPT review cycle. It has been Brazil's traditional stand that efforts towards non-proliferation must take place in parallel with efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Horizontal proliferation is a real and serious concern. Parties to the NPT must take a sober look at current challenges to the regime and try hard not only to find ways to ensure compliance with its prohibitions but also to make the Treaty universal. The threat posed by enduring nuclear arsenals is perceived by a large majority of the parties to the NPT to be at least as important as the risks of further proliferation.

Non-proliferation efforts must, however, respect the basic and inalienable right of States to engage in research on, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without any discrimination and in conformity with applicable legal obligations.

Having held the presidency of the seventh Review Conference of the NPT last year, Brazil is expected, following past practice, to submit to the General Assembly during this session a draft resolution calling for the convening of the preparatory process for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We hope that this process will contribute to the strengthening of the Treaty and to its balanced implementation.

Also in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, I should point out that, as part of its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, Brazil accepted the chairmanship of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for 2006-2007 and hosted the 2006 plenary in Brasilia in June.

It is regrettable that throughout 2006 the Conference on Disarmament remained deadlocked over its programme of work. The structured debates based on all items of its agenda during the 2006 session were, however, an innovative attempt to create a more receptive environment. We hope that such initiatives will facilitate the adoption of a substantive programme of work.

Brazil hopes to achieve progress at the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference, which is to be held in Geneva in November. We are currently working in coordination with other Group of Latin American and Caribbean States members with a view to presenting joint proposals that include the idea of establishing a support unit for the Convention. The topic of export and import controls should also be discussed during the review process.

In the field of conventional weapons, we can only express our deep disappointment at the lack of substantive results at the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York last June. The General Assembly should adopt a decision to ensure that there is a proper framework for the continuous assessment of the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as measures to strengthen it.

Brazil is committed to the goal of negotiating effective, balanced and non-discriminatory multilateral regulations on the international arms trade, including a possible future treaty to regulate trade in conventional arms. One of the core objectives of an arms trade treaty must be to prevent conventional weapons from being diverted for illicit purposes, such as organized crime and terrorism, without prejudice to the right of States to produce, acquire and maintain such weapons for self-defence purposes in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Brazil's arms transfers are already subject to regular national export-control procedures, which incorporate all international commitments to which the country is a party. It is important that discussions on a possible future arms trade treaty focus not solely on criteria for the authorization of arms transfers, but also on practical measures aimed at preventing diversion.

The concept of development is closely related to that of disarmament. Arms expenditures divert substantive financial, material and human resources that could be otherwise invested in social programmes. We believe that in the context of the future negotiation of an arms trade treaty, due consideration should be given to the taxation of the arms trade as an example of an innovative financing mechanism.

Mr. Mine (Japan). At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Juul, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I have confidence in your ability to guide us through this session, and I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out that important task. This session has not been under way for very long, but you have already demonstrated that you are truly committed to the efficient management of the Committee.

Earlier speakers have spoken about the problems that we are facing and the challenges for the international community, so I will not spend time repeating those points. We have no time to lament those results. Two review conferences — those on the Conventional Weapons Convention and on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention — still await us this year. Furthermore, the Conference on Disarmament, building on the momentum developed this year, is expected to move ahead next year. In addition, next year we will begin the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in preparation for the 2010 Review Conference.

Against this backdrop, the First Committee must squarely confront the challenges that the international community faces. It must hold in-depth deliberations on how the problems can be resolved in an efficient and effective manner, harmonize as much as possible the various approaches of Member States and adopt powerful, action-oriented draft resolutions. Japan's draft resolution on nuclear disarmament calls for practical and realistic steps, including deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons. It deals with important items, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a fissile material cut-off treaty, to which I will refer later.

The draft resolution on small arms and light weapons, which is submitted each year by Columbia, South Africa and Japan, has laid out a clear road map for the steady implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, including the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument of marking and tracing and of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in this area. Furthermore, in the area of small arms and light weapons, there are a few problems that we must make every effort to tackle if we are to achieve consensus.

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the First Committee's methods of work is crucial not only in and of itself, but also in the context of United Nations reforms. We do not need to formulate novel ideas to this end. Rather, we should aim for the full implementation of resolution 59/95, adopted in 2004. In this connection, Japan places great emphasis on the biennialization or triennialization of agenda items on a voluntary basis; the submission of draft resolutions in a more concise, focused and action-oriented manner; the consideration of merging draft resolutions on related or complementary issues; follow-up on agreed draft resolutions; and information from the Secretary-General on the detailed estimated cost of all draft resolutions and draft decisions. In particular, the First Committee should always be aware of budgetary implications when deliberating on draft resolutions and draft decisions. Also, greater involvement on the part of civil society in the work of the Committee is important.

Draft resolutions adopted in the First Committee and, subsequently, in the General Assembly, should not be left unattended, but must be followed up. As a first step, Japan calls upon all Member States to refer to their follow-up actions in their general debate statements. I would like to refer — as one example — to follow-up actions in connection with our draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. With regard to the universalization of the NPT and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Japan held disarmament and non-proliferation talks with India, Pakistan and Israel from May to June this year and urged all three countries to join the NPT and ratify the CTBT. Those are some of our past follow-up activities; we will continue such activities in the future.

At this stage, I would like to touch upon the fact that this year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT. The Treaty now enjoys near-universal support: 176 countries have signed it and 135 have ratified it. We greatly welcome Viet Nam's ratification in March this year, which means that the ratification of only 10 more countries is required for its entry into force. For the purpose of facilitating its early entry into force, a ministerial meeting in support of the CTBT was held two weeks ago in this building, which was attended by Mr. Ito, who was at that time Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. In relation to the upcoming meetings of the international forums, including the two Review Conferences and the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations should not only render the necessary logistical assistance and services, but also pay close attention to their outcomes so that future meetings will succeed. Of particular importance are the Conference on Disarmament and the new NPT review process, both of which will be referred to in the various draft resolutions, including Japan's nuclear disarmament draft resolution.

Before concluding, let me say a few words about the Conference on Disarmament. This year, a more productive environment has developed thanks to the Six Presidents initiative. The only missing element now is the commencement of negotiations. As I stated in one of the final meetings of the Conference, although there exists a range of opinions from the perspective of the whole Conference schedule, no opposition has been expressed by any Member State to the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The current and incoming Presidents should closely cooperate, so that the Conference can finally begin negotiations on a fissile material treaty as soon as next year's sessions begin. In the meantime, all of the Conference member States should do their utmost to prepare for the immediate commencement of such negotiations, while trying to continue and even strengthen our deliberations on the other major agenda items of the Conference.

Lastly, regarding the important commencement of the new review process of the NPT, in order to

overcome the disappointing results of 2005, the State parties should all work together towards a constructive beginning for the upcoming 2007 Preparatory Committee in order to achieve a successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): We are very pleased to see you, Madam, in the Chair presiding over this session of the Committee. You can be assured of my delegation's full support. This year has brought a mixture of challenges and opportunities in the disarmament and international security realm.

We were among those who were disappointed that there was no agreement on an outcome document recording this year's review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We do not underestimate the complexities of reconciling state sovereignty, commercial and trade freedoms and civil liberty considerations with steps that need to be taken at the global level to mitigate and prevent the harm done by the illicit trade in light weapons. At the same time, we consider that further action at the global level is possible and warranted. We need to pursue opportunities to make that happen. In particular, New Zealand supports further work on an arms trade treaty, transfer principles and brokering, over the course of the next year.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), during its 2006 sessions, seemed, at times, closer to breaking its decade-long stalemate than at any other point in recent years. Under the Six Presidents schedule of activities, useful structured thematic debates were held on the core areas of the CD's mandate, in which the participation of experts was a most welcome development. However, we must guard against convincing ourselves that such discussions constitute an adequate substitute for substantive work. We urge all delegations in the Conference to capitalize on the momentum generated this year and to exercise maximum flexibility in their efforts to commence substantive negotiations.

In our view, an immediate task for any rejuvenated CD should be the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). That issue deserves priority consideration on a number of fronts, with its potential as a preventative measure in terms of minimizing stockpile build-up, and also as a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We are all aware of the sensitivities surrounding the issues of stocks and verification. However, to make the commencement of such negotiations subject to agreement on those divisive points at the outset further compromises the security of us all.

The key imperative at this stage should be the launching of negotiations without prejudging their outcome. For New Zealand's part, we are prepared to approach negotiations without preconditions. Within the framework of that process we would then argue for an FMCT that deals adequately with existing stocks and has structured verification provisions. The potential for such a treaty to function as a supporting mechanism for nuclear disarmament is clear. Any instrument that contributes to a norm against the production of nuclear weapons helps to provide momentum to the nuclear disarmament debate.

Creating a world safe from nuclear weapons remains one of the international community's most pressing priorities. My delegation has already registered its views on the imperative for the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments through the statement of the New Agenda Coalition, delivered by Ambassador Shoukry of Egypt at the outset of this general debate. One of the most important responsibilities of the work of the First Committee will be to ensure a smooth start to the next Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review process, so that measurable substantive progress within the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime can be achieved.

We commend the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General Mohamed ElBaradei in verifying that nuclear energy programmes are for peaceful uses. It is clear that more stringent verification tools are required to fulfil that mandate. The Additional Protocol is the contemporary verification standard and, as such, should logically be a condition of nuclear supply. We urge those States that have not yet concluded Additional Protocols with the Agency to do so without delay.

We call on Iran to put in place full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA, to respect all of its commitments and to continue negotiations on long-term arrangements. In the pursuit of those objectives, New Zealand supports IAEA and the calls by the

Security Council for Iran to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing programme and comply with all of the requirements of United Nations Security Council resolution 1696 (2006).

The decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to pursue the possession of nuclear weapons creates a serious challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the stability and security of the Asia-Pacific region, which was already exacerbated by the missile tests in July. We believe that committed dialogue, rather than military brinksmanship, provides the best possibility for achieving a peaceful and comprehensive resolution, and we therefore urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Six Party Talks process.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is imperative that the treaty enter into force. New Zealand remains fully committed to encouraging the universalization of the CTBT. For us, it remains important that we back our political support for the Treaty by assisting the CTBT in its efforts to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty. In December, we will be participating in the eleventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Chemical Weapons. We will be emphasising that all chemical weapons stockpiles must be destroyed by 2012, the deadline in the Convention. Our focus at the Conference will be on the ongoing implementation of the Convention, particularly in the Pacific, as well as on improving the current methodology for selecting sites for inspections.

New Zealand is playing its part towards achieving this goal by contributing, through the Group of Eight (G8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, to the chemical-weapons destruction project at Shchuch'ye in the Russian Federation. Through the G8 Global Partnership, New Zealand is also contributing funds towards a project to shut down Russia's last plutonium-producing nuclear reactor and replace it with a fossil-fuel plant. Both of these contributions are practical examples of New Zealand's commitment to disarmament and nuclear safety.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2006, we have two further important opportunities to make concrete progress on disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

New Zealand is committed to playing an active role in the upcoming Review Conference on the Convention on certain conventional weapons in November and looks forward to seeing progress made on the effective implementation of international humanitarian law so as to mitigate the humanitarian impact of conflict. In particular, New Zealand supports the negotiation of a new, legally binding instrument, which addresses the humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions. We would also welcome the conclusion of an instrument on mines other than anti-personnel mines, if a legally binding text could be agreed that made a credible improvement on existing international humanitarian law provisions in this respect.

The Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention will also give States the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the international management of the biological weapons threat through a comprehensive review of that Treaty. Against the backdrop of rapid developments taking place in biotechnology industries and the threat of terrorist acquisition and use of biological agents for malicious purposes, States parties will need to find new ways to make the Treaty's implementation relevant and effective in the contemporary environment. New Zealand supports the discussion and development of practical steps, which can achieve pragmatic results, particularly in areas relating to national implementation, confidence-building measures, implementation support and inter-sessional processes.

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report, released in June, reminded us all of the need for a cooperative approach to collective security and a rule-based international order. Our work within the framework of the First Committee should be based on these principles. The international community must collaborate to build the necessary confidence and transparency required to achieve meaningful gains on disarmament and non-proliferation. New Zealand is committed to playing its part in this process.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the Russian delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your appointment to the presidency. I would also like to express the certainty that under your guidance we will be able to achieve the results in disarmament and non-proliferation that we all need.

The work of the current session of the General Assembly convincingly demonstrates that there is no alternative to collective action by the international community aimed at maintaining peace and security. The Russian Federation has always advocated the crucial role for the United Nations in dealing with this vital task. The issues of non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament remain some of the major areas for joint efforts on the part of the international community.

In recent years, counteracting the major threat posed by international terrorism has overshadowed the urgent issues of disarmament. However, it is too early to speak of an end to the arms race in the world. In his address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 10 May 2006 President Vladimir Putin pointed out that the arms race had entered a new spiral with the new levels of technology that raised the threat of the emergence of a whole arsenal of so-called destabilizing weapons. Containing possible aggression, increasing international status, achieving supremacy over neighbours and the possibility of economic benefits are factors that incite a number of countries to try to obtain such weapons and implement wide-scale military programmes.

A freeze on disarmament efforts naturally negatively affects the process of containing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and does not prevent terrorists from gaining access to those weapons. Unprecedented military expenditures exceeding the highest Cold War levels on the part of various countries, the continuing modernization of strategic offensive and defensive weapons, the danger of positioning weapons in outer space and the use of informational weapons ultimately negatively affect the efforts to maintain the strategic balance of forces in the world. We are convinced that the issue of disarmament should remain on the agenda of international forums and meetings.

Undoubtedly, relations between Russia and the United States are of key importance for preventing a new spin in the arms race and maintaining strategic stability. The importance of our agreements in the area of limitation and reduction of strategic armaments far exceeds the framework of bilateral relations. Substantial positive results have been achieved in this field.

Not only do we strictly observe the limitations under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, but we also continue further reductions on nuclear armaments. Because the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will expire in December 2009, Russia has proposed to our American partners to re-launch the negotiation process.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including its anti-terrorist aspects, remains at the focus of Russian policy during its Group of Eight (G8) Presidency. The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, put forward by the Presidents of Russia and the United States, was unanimously supported by all G8 leaders in their special statement adopted at this year's Summit in July in St. Petersburg. This initiative constitutes, in essence, a plan of action to foster practical cooperation of States on the implementation of the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as to comply with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, the G8 Summit placed new emphasis on the need to elaborate practical measures to ensure access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for countries that faithfully comply with their treaty obligations.

The initiative of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, with regard to the establishment of international centres to provide services in the field of the nuclear fuel cycle is intended to facilitate achieving the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation. It provides for an alternative to the development of sensitive elements of the nuclear fuel cycle, namely, the enrichment and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. We intend to work jointly with all interested States on the realization of this initiative with active involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We believe that one of the major threats to the global stability is the possibility of the placement of weapons in outer space. The task of preventing such a scenario is within our strength. The debates held this year at the Conference on Disarmament addressing military and space issues revealed great interest on the parts of States in ensuring that outer space is not turned into an arena of military confrontation, as well as to secure the safe operation of spacecraft and the integrity of costly space assets. The idea of concluding a treaty banning the stationing of weapons in outer space and banning the use or threat of force against space-based objects is gaining side support. We are in favour of the

earliest re-establishment of an ad hoc committee at the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can serve the purpose of discouraging the placement of weapons in space. We would like to recall the Russian pledge, made at the United Nations, that Russia will not be the first to place weapons in outer space. A similar political commitment was made by the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We repeat our call on all States that have military space capability to follow our example.

We believe that the time has come to review the entire range of confidence-building measures in outer space from a modern viewpoint and update the proposals on this issue that were elaborated at the United Nations during the beginning of the 1990s. We plan to submit for review of the First Committee a new draft resolution entitled "Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities". We call on delegations to support this Russian initiative.

The possibility of using information and communication technologies for hostile purposes presents a serious threat to security at the national, regional and international levels. It is important to keep the issues of ensuring international information security at the centre of United Nations attention and not to weaken joint efforts to seek approved ways to deal with such issues effectively. We intend, in this connection, to introduce an updated draft resolution entitled "Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security", prepared on the basis of the last year's text. We hope that it will be supported.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the foundation of international security and stability. We maintain that new challenges and threats to the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be resolved on the basis of this Treaty. Even today, we should set a business-like tone to prepare for the next five-year review of the Treaty beginning in 2007. We advocate a collective search for solutions aimed at strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, in particular, its unconditional implementation at the national level and an increase of its universality and viability.

In this context the settlement of the problems related to the nuclear programme of Iran remains relevant. We stand for political and diplomatic solutions, which, on the one hand, will allow Iran to develop nuclear energy under the IAEA safeguards and assure, on the other hand, the exclusively peaceful character of Teheran's nuclear programme.

I think that the delegates will be able to familiarize themselves with the basic points of my statement currently being distributed. I would like to draw everyone's attention to a positive development, as of today, with regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I would like in that connection to welcome the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. This is an important step in fostering the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime. We expect that the Treaty will facilitate strengthening security and stability in the Central Asian region, and will make a substantial contribution to the fight against international terrorism and to preventing nuclear materials and technologies from falling into the hands of non-State actors.

Let me assure you of the support and cooperation on the part of the Russian Delegation for achieving practical results in the work of the Committee.

The Chairperson: Let me remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close tomorrow, Tuesday, at 6 p.m. Therefore, those delegations that have not yet inscribed themselves on the list should do so as soon as possible. I would also make an appeal to delegations to be flexible during the general debate and be prepared to speak one day earlier, in line with the practice of the rolling list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.3

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee
3rd meeting
Tuesday, 3 October 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: I remind representatives to limit their statements to 10 minutes — or less — for those speaking in their national capacity and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

I would also like to reiterate that the use of the rolling list means that representatives should be prepared to speak sooner than they had originally planned.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your election to chair the Committee this year. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that under your leadership, the work of the Committee to achieve its mandate and objectives will be greatly facilitated.

Indonesia fully associates itself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are gathered here today against the backdrop of a series of setbacks in multilateral disarmament forums in recent years. The lack of progress in pursuing disarmament and non-proliferation objectives is a cause of great distress for all those who aspire to a peaceful and stable world. It is imperative that lessons be learned from those setbacks.

We are dismayed that there is increased scepticism in some States about the effectiveness of multilateral institutions and instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Some want their global superiority in weaponry to remain untouched, yet at the same time they are asking others to control their armament capabilities. The role of the First Committee is all the more important because of those realities.

In this context, symptomatic treatment and ad hoc solutions will not yield durable results. Multilateralism should be at the heart of all of our efforts and negotiations in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. We need to do better if we are indeed committed to the promotion of international peace and security.

International concern about the proliferation risk of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, is clearly intensifying. But it should not be forgotten that thousands of nuclear weapons still exist and that even more sophisticated versions of such deadly weapons are being developed.

Some continue to convey the message that nuclear weapons are intolerable in the hands of rogue States and terrorists. We believe that those catastrophic devices are dangerous in anyone's hands, including in the hands of nuclear-weapon States. We should always keep in mind the danger posed by such weapons, be it

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from accidents or miscalculations. We should not try to develop new nuclear weapons. On the contrary, the existing stock of such weapons should be outlawed and eliminated in a systematic and progressive manner.

Rhetoric alone will not suffice to address this issue. Leadership for peace and disarmament should be through example. The eventual elimination of nuclear weapons is not beyond the world's reach. The failure to act is because there is still a lack of leadership on the part of nuclear-weapon States. They do not seem to take seriously their commitment to nuclear disarmament. That is why we will not stop urging them to take the necessary steps to make further progress on nuclear disarmament in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the landmark international treaty for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, for promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and for achieving nuclear disarmament. The NPT review process serves as an important mechanism for assessing progress in the implementation of the global nuclear non-proliferation norms and commitments. The new cycle of the NPT review process, which will begin next year with the first preparatory meeting in Vienna, will provide a new opportunity to the States parties to show their commitment for a safe and secure world. In the next five years, the States parties to the Treaty should consider which practical steps might be taken to strengthen the Treaty and to ensure its relevance to the present situation.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) continues to languish due to the refusal of some nuclear-weapon States to adhere to the Treaty. As a signatory of the CTBT, Indonesia believes that the prohibition of nuclear tests, whether explosive or non-explosive, is an effective measure towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We realize our responsibility and will continue our constitutional process for the ratification of the CTBT.

We also look forward to the urgent commencement of negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty without conditions. It is important that the negotiations in that regard should focus both on existing stocks and on the future production of weapons-usable materials.

My delegation reaffirms that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive step towards the strengthening of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome the signing of the Treaty on the Creation of a Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which was done in Semipalatinsk on 8 September 2006.

We are of the view that the international community should not be sceptical about the activities of some States that are parties to the NPT if they want to build a nuclear programme that is not meant for military purposes. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable right of States, guaranteed by the NPT. In this regard, we should all recognize the role of International Atomic Energy Agency as the sole competent authority for the verification of compliance with obligations under safeguards agreements and the additional protocols.

It is unfortunate that for the seventh consecutive year the Conference on Disarmament was unable to reach agreement on a programme of work and could not even agree on the substantive report for its 2006 session. However, we welcome the exercise on a focused structured debate in the Conference on Disarmament on all agenda items and hope that this will facilitate the achievement of agreement on the programme of work in the near future.

Despite managing to hold a substantive session this year after a long impasse, the Disarmament Commission was unable to produce a substantive outcome. But we very much appreciated the efforts of the delegations during its current cycle, trying to advance ideas to bridge the divisions among member States. We look forward to the next substantive session and hope that, with enhanced political will, we will be able to narrow the differences.

In the aftermath of the inability of the 2005 World Summit to agree on any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation issues in its Outcome Document (resolution 60/1), the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, among others, has recommended that the General Assembly consider calling another world summit focused on precisely these issues. We support such a proposal, taking into account that the idea behind it is in line with the proposal for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which has

the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Indonesia believes that the focus on the threat of weapons of mass destruction should not lessen the attention to the regulation and reduction of conventional weapons. The proliferation of conventional arms, particularly illicit small arms and light weapons, has seriously violated the peace in many regions of the world. It is disappointing that the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, adopted in 2001, not only failed to agree on a final document but was also unable to provide a mandate to the General Assembly on follow-up steps for further implementation.

As a signatory of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, Indonesia is well aware of the concerns of States parties about the status of our ratification process. Being late in ratifying the Convention does not indicate our lack of commitment to its principles and objectives. Following the submission of the draft law of ratification by the Indonesian Government to the parliament for consideration, on 11 September 2006, we are now in the final stage of the ratification process.

In conclusion, Indonesia assures the international community of its full support and cooperation in working on concrete initiatives on global disarmament and non-proliferation. We must rise up to the challenges before us with greater vigour and political will to help bring about a future that is truly worthy of our next generation and is based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): At the outset, Madam Chairperson, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election and to assure you of my delegation's full support in the discharge of your duties.

Mongolia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I should like to make a few observations from my national perspective on issues of interest to my country.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2006, there were 17 major armed conflicts at 16 locations around the world in 2005. The Yearbook finds that there has been a steady decline in the number of conflicts since 1999; the figure for 2005 was the lowest for the entire post-cold-war period. Yet despite the statistics, the world around us can hardly be characterized as a safer place to live. Violence, terrorist attacks and other security threats and challenges continue to ravage the daily lives of people, pushing poverty-stricken communities deeper into the abyss of despair and misery and having a negative impact on global development. The recent conflict in Lebanon was a sad reminder of the vulnerability of human security and peace in today's world.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — or even the mere existence of arsenals of such weapons — growing terrorist threats and continued access by non-State actors to ever more sophisticated weapons systems negatively affect world peace and stability. Unfortunately, a general sense of disappointment prevails today among Member States over the current situation in multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and international security, and my delegation shares that sentiment.

Indeed, the situation does not look promising. The sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body — the Conference on Disarmament — has been paralysed for nine consecutive sessions, despite the fact that, during its 2006 session, there was some sense that positive developments might be possible.

The Disarmament Commission, although it was able to resume its work following two years of deadlock on its agenda, was nevertheless unable to make substantive progress during its most recent session. Furthermore, the lack of success of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the striking absence of language pertaining to disarmament and non-proliferation in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit; and, more recently, the failure of the United Nations Conference to Review the Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects have all been major setbacks.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, my delegation believes that we must not give in to pessimism. I am convinced that the current situation requires all Member States to display renewed political will and determination as well as increased flexibility in order to break the present impasse in different

multilateral disarmament bodies and to strengthen the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Let us make full use of the session of the First Committee of the General Assembly to engage in open and constructive dialogue so as to bridge the gap between different positions for the common good.

Mongolia, guided by the principles and objectives of its peaceful foreign policy, reflected, inter alia, in its Constitution and in the Concepts on Foreign Policy and on National Security, has consistently pursued the objective of global disarmament while according the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. Given the horrendous destructive capacity of nuclear weapons, Mongolia believes that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world would enhance both global security and Mongolia's own national security.

Mongolia calls on all States that have not yet done so to accede to all international treaties and conventions relating to weapons of mass destruction and non-proliferation and disarmament, particularly the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and Toxin Weapons Convention, and to strengthen the international regime established by those treaties.

The NPT is the most important legally binding instrument available to the international community to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to work towards their complete elimination and to promote cooperation among States on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. My country is fully committed to the full implementation of the decisions of the 1995 and 2000 NPT review conferences. In particular, we believe that the 13 practical steps and systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the NPT must be fully implemented.

Against the backdrop of the current challenges faced by the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, we should now focus on preparations for the next review conference to ensure its successful outcome.

My delegation once again reiterates its strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the importance of its early entry into force and universality. Mongolia also supports the early conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States as a matter of priority, as well as the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

According to aforementioned *Yearbook*, the majority of major conflicts in 2005 occurred in Asia. That observation cannot but worry my country. Furthermore, in addition to the existing conflicts on the continent, two issues relating to nuclear non-proliferation have been a source of concern for countries both in and outside of Asia, namely, nuclear programmes in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mongolia strongly believes in the inalienable right of non-nuclear-weapon States that have fully complied with their obligations under the NPT to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. At the same time, in the case of Iran's nuclear programme, we also note that the process of drawing conclusions with regard to the absence of undeclared material and activities in Iran is an ongoing and time-consuming process. It is important that Iran continue to cooperate actively and fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to resolve outstanding issues in order to promote confidence and peaceful resolution of the issue.

Mongolia, a North-East Asian nation with internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free status, is in favour of a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula and attaches vital importance to the resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear issue by peaceful means through negotiations and the early resumption of the six-party talks.

Due to its historical and geopolitical realities, North-East Asia is probably the only subregion that lacks a mechanism at the governmental level where security issues of concern could be discussed collectively. The present situation in the subregion highlights the renewed importance and relevance of the proposal made by Mongolia in 2000 from the rostrum in the General Assembly Hall on engaging North-East Asian nations in a political-security dialogue at the track 1 level.

It may be time to look into the possibility of engaging in such a dialogue, starting with a free exchange of views on the framework of such discussions among interested delegations during this session of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

My country has always been a strong supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are a crucial element of the global non-proliferation regime and an important confidence-building measure in various regions of the world.

In that regard, my delegation warmly welcomes the signing of a nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty by five Central Asian States in Semipalatinsk on 8 September 2006. That is an important contribution to confidence-building and stability in Asia.

In conclusion, may I note that Mongolia this year once again will submit a biannual draft resolution on Mongolia's international security and its nuclear-weapon-free status, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus, as was the case at the previous session.

Mrs. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam Chairperson, allow me to start by congratulating you on your election and on that of all the other members of the Bureau to guide our work. Colombia recognizes your country's commitment to general and complete disarmament in all its aspects, and we trust that, thanks to your professional skills and personal qualities, the First Committee will be able to successfully conclude its work during this session. My delegation would like also to warmly welcome the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, to whom we wish every possible success in his work at the helm of this important Committee.

Colombia supports the statement made yesterday by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

One year ago, in this very forum, we deplored the worrisome state of the disarmament process. The lack of specific recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation in the Document adopted by heads of State and Government in 2005 was a reflection of the difficulties besetting multilateralism in that field. Since then, very little, if anything, has changed in that respect. On the contrary, setbacks such as the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the deadlock in the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in recent years remain a cause of great concern for countries such as mine, which would like to see the disarmament machinery working to its fullest capacity.

My delegation was particularly concerned by the outcome of the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York last June and July. As one of the countries most affected by the scourge of the illicit trade in arms, Colombia deeply regrets that the Review Conference did not reach agreement on a final document reflecting the concerns and initiatives of States in their fight against this problem. The 2001 Programme of Action remains the keystone of the efforts that need to be realized to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which claims so many lives the world over each year. We also reaffirm our support for the principles contained in the Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala, signed by Latin American and Caribbean countries last May.

In recent years, Colombia has submitted draft resolutions entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", together with Japan and South Africa; a similar text will again be submitted to the First Committee at this session. We hope that the valuable support of delegations for this important issue since its introduction — support reflected in the annual adoption of these draft resolutions by consensus — will continue this year.

In spite of the seemingly bleak panorama before us, Colombia wishes to reaffirm its confidence in multilateralism as an essential path for the strengthening of our efforts and for persevering in the achievement of United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation goals. To that end, my delegation calls once again for the restoration of the First Committee's central role in the context of the mandate entrusted to the General Assembly in the Charter of the United Nations.

With a view to achieving general and complete disarmament, which Colombia promotes as a State

policy, my country has signed all international instruments on weapons of mass destruction. In that category, nuclear weapons are, without a doubt, still the most destructive weapons of all. For that reason, nuclear disarmament remains one of the top priorities of Colombia's foreign policy in the overall field of disarmament. In that respect, Colombia welcomes the agreement reached in September by five countries in Central Asia through which a new nuclear-weapon-free zone has been established under the Treaty of Semipalatinsk.

As is widely known, constitutional difficulties arising from the prohibition to make retroactive payments have prevented Colombia from ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which we entirely support in spirit and in letter. My country will continue to endeavour to overcome the difficulties surrounding this situation, which will we touch upon in greater detail during the relevant thematic debate in this Committee.

Major challenges await us during this General Assembly. We are confident that we will be able to achieve concrete and positive results on the long list of agenda items before us. My country will participate actively and concretely in the thematic debates to be held in the First Committee at this period of the session.

Mr. Baird (Australia): The Australian delegation congratulates you, Madam, on your appointment as Chair of this Committee and looks forward to working closely with you over the coming month. I would note that a copy of this statement will be made available on the Australian Mission's website.

As we all know too well, the international community failed to make anything at all of recent opportunities to make our world more secure through multilateral action on non-proliferation and disarmament. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the World Summit and this year's Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons all proved unable to agree on any substantive outcomes.

We must do better. As we look forward to the commencement in 2007 of the next NPT review cycle, it is self-evident that strengthened political will in dealing with non-proliferation challenges is essential if we are to preserve the benefits all States receive from the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Fresh thinking will be needed to avoid a repeat of the failed 2005 NPT Review Conference and to better orient the NPT review process to deal with current proliferation threats. Similarly, Australia looks forward to a renewed focus in the First Committee this year on practical measures to promote international peace and security.

In today's complex security environment, no single tool can meet the challenges presented by States and non-State actors that are of proliferation concern. For this reason, we support a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), disarmament and arms control issues, including through participation in export control regimes. Australia encourages a firmer and more active role for the Security Council on WMD proliferation. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) demonstrates that the responsibility for addressing the threat of WMD proliferation falls squarely within the Security Council's mandate. We welcome the Security Council's decision to extend the mandate and the work of the 1540 Committee. We also support the Council's engagement on Iran's nuclear programme and the missile activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, particularly in the light of the latter country's very concerning announcement today that it plans to conduct a nuclear test.

September marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), a treaty that would rid the world of nuclear weapons testing forever. Last year's vote in this Committee demonstrated that an overwhelming number of countries regarded the CTBT as a vital contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation. Through our role as coordinator on article XIV of the CTBT, Australia is actively promoting the Treaty's entry into force. Australia will again introduce a draft resolution on the CTBT in the First Committee this year.

Australia will also once again introduce a draft resolution on landmines. Australia was one of the original signatories to the Mine-Ban Convention and, as current Chair of the Meetings of the States Parties, has initiated a universalization strategy. Last year, Australia committed a further $75 million over a five-year period to mine action.

The existing multilateral proliferation and arms control framework must also be complemented by coordinated and practically focused measures. Australia is a strong supporter of the Proliferation Security Initiative, and has long advocated measures such as additional protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the fissile material cut-off treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as practical steps against the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery. Australia is also among the authors of a new First Committee draft resolution that will provide the foundation for work towards an arms trade treaty.

It is our hope that this year the First Committee will produce strong, effective draft resolutions that will enable the international community to address in a practical way current and emerging threats to international peace and security. You, Madam Chairperson, have our unwavering support in achieving that end.

Mr. Muburi-Muita (Kenya): Madam Chairperson, I congratulate you on your appointment to preside over this important Committee. My delegation has every confidence in your ability to meet this challenge. We look forward to working closely with you with a view to realizing positive results in our deliberations.

We thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his thoughtful presentation on the numerous challenges that confront in our vital work on disarmament today. We share his assessment on all issues, especially on the disappointing outcomes of both the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Kenya associates itself with the statement presented by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also associate ourselves with the statement to be made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union (AU).

Kenya attaches great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its objectives. Kenya supports all efforts aimed at addressing pending issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. We urge all States parties to the NPT to fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and fulfil their obligations under the Treaty. We also encourage those States not party to the Treaty to join it so as to secure wider support in realizing the Treaty's goals of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, nurturing a culture of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and promoting general and complete disarmament.

The negative effects that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has in our region and elsewhere in the world is well documented. Kenya has been unequivocal in the battle for a comprehensive, sustained effort towards preventing, combating and eradicating the trade in illicit small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We attach great importance to reducing the demand for small arms, both internally and in the region. Kenya has taken deliberate measures in addressing the problem of illicit small arms, including through a national policy and plan of action, the establishment of provincial and district task forces, the destruction of arms, the strengthening of national coordination structures, the participation of civil society and the integration of these efforts into community development programmes.

Kenya continues to ascribe great importance to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Programme of Action provides a road map to address the problem of small arms and light weapons. The Programme however, needs to be backed by clear global principles governing arms transfers. Such principles, if adopted, can provide a sound basis for a global legally binding instrument. Although this may appear ambitious, in several regions of the world a great deal has already been achieved at the subregional and regional levels in terms of the development of common criteria to deal with international transfers of small arms and light weapons. Examples include the 2005 Best Practice Guidelines for the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the 2004 Southern African Economic Community (SADC) Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, the 1998 European Union (EU) Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and the 2003 EU Common Position on the Control of Arms Brokering.

There are clear areas of commonality among major regional and multilateral initiatives, and there is

consensus on a number of specific criteria that effective small arms and light weapons transfer controls should cover. What is lacking are global standards. We need to exert ourselves more, and we need to have the political will and courage to build on the progress that has already been achieved regionally to produce a set of international small arms and light weapons transfer control guidelines that will be applicable globally. Section II, paragraph 11, of the United Nations small arms and light weapons Programme of Action provides the ideal institutional basis for such an accord. We, therefore, urge States to seize the opportunity to make substantive progress on this issue.

Last July, Kenya expressed its deep disappointment at the inability of the Review Conference to evolve a basic outcome document. We then pledged, with others, that we would pursue a more suitable way forward during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Today, with others, Kenya is sponsoring a First Committee draft resolution that seeks to establish an effective international instrument that would regulate the international trade in conventional arms so as to prevent, combat and eradicate those sales or transfers of arms that are likely to promote conflict, crime or terrorism. We will work closely with all delegations to bring this to fruition. We urge all delegations to grasp this historic opportunity and travel with us in developing such an important outcome.

On 7 October last year, Kenya noted that multilateral solutions to disarmament were under stress (see A/C.1/60/PV.7). We welcomed and supported the proposal on initiating work on certain priority disarmament and non-proliferation issues in an effort to re-energize disarmament diplomacy at the Conference on Disarmament. Six nations, including Kenya, drove this initiative, but held back when new developments stopped the process. We are willing to explore this initiative during the present session, if the perception and reality of a "consensus veto" continues to frustrate our efforts.

I conclude by reiterating my delegation's commitment to the objectives of disarmament that are the raison d'être of the First Committee.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I wish, Madam, on behalf of the African Group, to congratulate you on your election to chair the First Committee during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Through you, the African Group wishes to convey its congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. The Group has confidence in your ability to guide the affairs of this Committee to a successful conclusion. I assure you and the Bureau of the full support and cooperation of the African Group in addressing the task ahead.

The African Group wishes to reiterate its commitment to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The Group believes in the need for the pursuit and eventual attainment of the goal of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind. The commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and calling for their total elimination, has, therefore, become a necessity. Among the first steps towards the realization of this objective should be a commitment by nuclear-weapon States to immediately stop the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which nuclear-weapon States will undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. As an important confidence-building measure, such an instrument will no doubt help reduce current international political tension in certain parts of the world, particularly those of major global concern. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any nuclear disarmament process be irreversible, transparent and verifiable in order to be meaningful.

The African Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group once again wishes to express its regret at the non-implementation of the Final Document of SSOD I 28 years after its adoption. The African Group underscores the need for convening SSOD IV in order

to give real meaning to the nuclear disarmament process.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a vital instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Group endorses the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference for systematic and progressive efforts to implement the unequivocal commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, in keeping with article VI of the NPT. In this regard, the Group continues to express regret over the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful outcome.

The African Group reiterates its long-standing support for the total elimination of all nuclear testing. The Group stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, among other things, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the Group endorses the joint ministerial declaration on the CTBT, adopted in New York on 20 September. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapons test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device be maintained.

The African Group emphasizes the importance of strengthening the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements by ensuring full compliance with and the effective implementation of those agreements, as well as their universality. The Group reaffirms its strong belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery as a means of advancing the process of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the Group expresses deep disappointment over the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive work. The Group calls on the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a work programme as soon as possible so that substantive negotiations can start.

The African Group reiterates its support for the concept of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in the regions concerned. In that regard, we welcome the signing of the treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone by Central Asian States on 8 September. The Group recalls the decision of the eighth ordinary session of the Executive Council of the African Union, which took place in Khartoum from 16 to 21 January, in which it called on States that have not signed or ratified the Pelindaba Treaty on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone or its protocols that concern them to do so in order to enable the Treaty to enter into force without further delay. We urge the affected States to implement or comply, as applicable, with the decision of the Council as soon as possible.

The African Group calls on States to take appropriate measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear or radioactive waste that infringes on the sovereignty of States. In that regard, the Group recalls the 1991 resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity on the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa. The Group also calls for the effective implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste as a means of enhancing the protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive waste on their territories.

The African Group wishes to reiterate its belief, as also recognized in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, in the full implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key element in promoting long-term security and for creating conditions for sustainable development in many developing countries, especially those in Africa. To achieve the desired results, it is imperative that the international community deal with the threat posed by the illicit small arms trade in a comprehensive and action-oriented manner. In that connection, the Group regrets the failure of the first Review Conference on the Programme of Action to agree on a final document. Considering the importance of that issue, we call on Member States to find a solution to that impasse.

Finally, the African Group continues to support the establishment of a group of governmental experts on brokering, considering that arms brokering plays a significant role in the illicit arms trade.

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to express to you, Madam, on behalf of Kuwait, our sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I stress my country's readiness to cooperate with you in making your tenure a success. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his statement at the opening of the general debate. I also endorse the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The failure twice last year to reach a consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation was a clear sign of the widening of international divisions on the most serious threat to international peace and security. The squandering of those opportunities to address pressing problems has made Member States more determined than ever to deal with that important issue, to prepare themselves for a historic transcendence of their differences, and to cooperate on the elimination of nuclear threats.

Although the international community now understands the dangers of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security, we have yet to achieve any progress towards averting their threat because of the lack of political will on the part of some to implement their commitments to international conventions and treaties. That failure highlights the importance of pursuing our efforts, adopting the requisite confidence-building measures, reviving such multilateral conventions as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and promoting disarmament.

Kuwait believes in the importance of collective action to ratify international conventions and treaties, from the NPT to the Chemical Weapons Convention; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction; the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident; the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; and the comprehensive safeguards agreements and their protocols. We urge all States to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to adhere to the safeguards regime in its entirety.

We believe that the Additional Protocol appended to the safeguards mechanism is yet another useful way to monitor prohibited and undeclared nuclear activities. We hope that all States parties to the NPT will comply with the provisions of their safeguards agreement and work closely with the IAEA, through negotiation and constructive dialogue, to resolve all problems and allay all suspicions concerning their programmes.

In that context, we call on Israel — the only State in the Middle East that is not a signatory to the NPT and that possesses nuclear weapons, in violation of resolutions of international legitimacy — to accede to the Treaty forthwith, to eliminate its nuclear arsenal, and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime. We stress our support for making the Middle East, including the Gulf region, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We call on the international community to prevent the sale of scientific and technological goods to Israel and to any other State that seeks to develop weapons of mass destruction production programmes.

I would point here to the 1997 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the illegality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to solve disputes. We reiterate our support for the conclusion of a non-discriminatory multilateral fissile material cut-off treaty in order to prevent the manufacture of nuclear weapons and other vectors of nuclear explosions.

The State of Kuwait urges the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran to continue to cooperate with the international community and the IAEA in allaying to rest all fears concerning the nature of its nuclear programme and to reach a full diplomatic solution to prevent the exacerbation of the crisis. That can be achieved if all parties concerned demonstrate flexibility, wisdom and a sense of responsibility. Here, account must be taken of the environmental dangers that could result from building the Bushehr nuclear reactor on the Gulf coast, since the neighbouring countries depend on desalination for much of their drinking water. In addition, many capitals are only a few dozen kilometres away from this nuclear reactor.

In its resolution 1673 (2006) of last April, the Security Council renewed the call it made in resolution 1540 (2004), which aims to keep weapons of mass

destruction and related materials out of the hands of terrorist groups. Kuwait welcomed that resolution and has submitted its national report to the Secretariat; our report outlined procedures we are following to guarantee our commitment to the provisions of the resolution. In that context, we would like to recall that last September Kuwait signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Kuwait would like to echo the Final Declaration of the 2005 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which calls upon States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so, especially since entry into force requires the ratification of certain States. It calls upon nuclear-weapon states to suspend or halt all nuclear tests until the Treaty enters into force.

Concerning the illicit trade in small and light weapons, Kuwait welcomed the General Assembly's adoption in December of last year of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (decision 60/519).

Despite the failure of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons to agree on further measures, it succeeded in drawing world attention to the issue. That is valuable because such weapons have fuelled many conflicts and have taken hundreds of thousands of lives, in addition to hampering development, in particular that of developing countries.

In conclusion, we hope that the negotiations in the First Committee will be transparent and comprehensive and that we can reach consensus in order to fulfil the aspirations and expectations of Member States as regards achieving international peace and security.

Mr. Berbash (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, Madam, I would like to congratulate you warmly on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that you will ably conduct our work, in view of your experience and high diplomatic skills. My delegation will cooperate fully with you as you carry out your lofty duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and with that made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

The establishment of international peace and security is among the noblest purposes of the United Nations. There is no doubt that genuine and complete disarmament, starting with weapons of mass destruction, is essential in the achievement of that objective. However, this cannot be achieved without the cooperation of all Member States in a spirit of goodwill and full transparency.

In this connection, when we speak of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear non-proliferation, we must not confuse nuclear armament programmes with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. International law guarantees the right of every State to engage in scientific research for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. My delegation always supports negotiations and allowing the necessary time for discussion in order to find just solutions to problems faced by the international community, instead of resorting to threats and the imposition of sanctions, which in themselves do not provide solutions to any problem. On the contrary, sanctions often make these problems more serious and complex.

My country continues to cooperate in all sincerity and transparency with international agencies, organizations and States that have shown readiness to cooperate in implementing the voluntary initiative taken by my country on 19 December 2003 and in helping my country comply with its obligations under relevant international conventions and resolutions. At present, we are seeking to adapt our laws to the provisions of those international conventions and resolutions. On 12 July 2006, we deposited instruments of ratification to our International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Additional Protocol and to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, on 16 September 2005.

On the practical level, we are transforming our facilities and utilizing our capabilities to carry out peaceful development programmes. In this respect, our delegation would like to express its gratitude to organizations and States that have worked with us to

achieve those objectives. We would also like to thank the States of the Group of Eight (G-8) for their readiness to cooperate with us in this area.

On 11 November 2004, my delegation applied for membership of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and has taken practical measures to comply with the criteria for acquisition of missiles in accordance with MTCR rules, as well as to exercise control over the export of materials in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

We have also complied with our commitment to respect the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. My country was among the first to sign the Code, on 25 November 2002, and we hope that States will support our application to join the MTCR as soon as possible.

My delegation would like to join in expressing disappointment about the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and of the 2006 small arms and light weapons Review Conference. We believe that reactivating the Conference on Disarmament is the best way to ensure the multilateralism we need and that the Conference is the ideal forum for the achievement of disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation welcomes the increase in world understanding and supports efforts to establish zones free of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate our support for making the Middle East a zone free of such weapons in order to achieve peace and security not only in the Middle East but throughout the world. Unfortunately, a nuclear-weapon-free zone still cannot be established in the Middle East because of the attitude of Israel, which continues to develop and produce nuclear weapons without monitoring or accountability and to refuse to join the relevant international conventions and treaties, thus posing a constant threat to the peace and security of the region and the world as a whole. Thus, the major Powers must fully shoulder their responsibilities by putting pressure on Israel to join all international instruments relating to nuclear disarmament and weapons of mass destruction, and Israel must submit its nuclear installations to international safeguards.

Current policies reflect double standards and selectivity. Non-nuclear-weapon States must have assurances so that they can feel secure; responding to their concerns will ultimately prevent them from manufacturing such weapons themselves.

In addition to our concern about the number of countries that possess weapons of mass destruction, we are faced with another problem: the large number of landmines and explosive remnants of war remaining in our territory. Such devices continue to kill, injure or disable thousands of innocent citizens. This represents an obstacle to development and to investment in regions where such mines and explosives are buried. We are therefore asking the States responsible for those mines to provide technical and financial assistance for their removal and compensation for the victims. My delegation supports the mine victims forum, which is mobilizing the necessary assistance with a view to resolving these problems.

My delegation renews its appeal to make the Mediterranean a region of peace and communications in which peoples can achieve their common objectives. But that cannot be done without the dismantling of foreign bases and fleets and without ensuring respect for the sovereignty of all States of the region and non-intervention in their internal affairs.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its readiness to contribute to all international disarmament efforts and to free humanity from weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We are convinced that regional and international peace and security are possible only through the strengthened international cooperation and international understanding among peoples in all areas. We therefore call upon the States that possess nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, whose criteria for possessing such weapons should not go beyond those set out in existing conventions, to eliminate such weapons in order to bring us closer to a world where peace and tranquillity can reign.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): I should like at the outset to extend my delegation's warmest congratulations to you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee during the sixty-first session. My sincere appreciation goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Choi Young-jin of the Republic of Korea, who guided our work to a successful conclusion during the sixtieth session.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia

on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

We are meeting once again in this Committee to address issues related to international security, disarmament, arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It should come as no surprise that results over the past year have been mixed, as achievements have been countervailed by challenges.

My delegation regrets that the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects failed to agree on an outcome document which would have improved on the way forward in the implementation of the Programme.

The climate for agreement on arms control and disarmament has actually deteriorated. Efforts to consolidate global treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, have stagnated. An insufficient number of countries have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and negotiations have not even opened on the much-needed treaty to stop the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. While we cannot expect to change the somewhat strained international climate overnight, my delegation believes that there are actions that can be taken to preserve and build international confidence to advance the cause of international disarmament and non-proliferation. These include reaffirming our collective commitment to preserve the sanctity of international agreements and collectively recognizing the need to pursue progress concurrently on both fronts — disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation is pleased to reaffirm that my country, Eritrea, is deeply committed to international efforts aimed at arms control and the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Accordingly, Eritrea is a State party to many of the conventions on arms control, including to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Eritrea has signed the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and is a subscribing State to the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Furthermore, Eritrea is also an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

My country has a profound and abiding interest in the maintenance of international and regional peace and security, as well as in the peaceful and legal settlement of disputes.

My Government, fully convinced of the importance of respecting the United Nations Charter and international law, is ready to implement the final and binding decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. Eritrea is likewise willing to contribute to regional peace, security and stability. In that regard, Eritrea is currently engaged in the collective negotiation efforts to promote peace and stability in the Sudan. My Government is hosting the eastern Sudan peace talks between the Sudanese Government and the Eastern Front.

My country reaffirms its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and pledges its full cooperation in combating that phenomenon. We have acceded to the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. Law enforcement authorities of the State of Eritrea have been working together with their counterparts in other countries of our subregion and on the continent at large, as well as cooperating with Interpol in the exchange of information on the prevention and suppression of terrorism.

Finally, Madam, my delegation wishes to express its hope and confidence that the Committee will be able to move purposefully forward under your leadership. My delegation assures you of its fullest cooperation and support.

Mr. Al-Taii (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am making this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Iraq, Mr. Hamid Al-Bayati.

I am pleased to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the Committee and in wishing you every success in your work as you guide our deliberations. We assure you of our full cooperation in the process of formulating draft resolutions and other

recommendations that will be received favourably by all countries.

It is an axiom that proliferation leads to an arms race and that a lack of trust and transparency leads to suspicion, tension and conflict and the possession of weapons, both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. The international community is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security; therefore, we must be committed to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation for a world or a region without controls is a dangerous one.

The Middle East continues to face the problem of insecurity and instability. The danger of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and of their means of delivery exists and is real. That has complicated the situation and has caused an increase in the level of terrorism in all its brutal forms and manifestations. Iraq believes it is essential that the Middle East be declared a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Therefore, in all relevant forums — including the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the League of Arab States — we are appealing to all States, without exception, to accede to treaties on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and calling for the implementation in the Middle East of the IAEA's full-scope safeguards regime. Here, we wish to strongly emphasize that Israel must adhere to the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to international inspection.

Iraq has experienced an extremely difficult period because of the rash policies of the previous regime, which caused the loss or destruction of our country's economy, wealth and resources. The previous regime believed that possession of weapons of mass destruction would enable it to dominate the region, but the result was exactly the opposite: history tells us what happened next. Under its new Government, Iraq will strive to become an element for regional and international security and stability and to avoid anything that could increase tension in the Middle East. Iraq's priority now is to rebuild so, alongside other countries, it can contribute again to modern civilization.

The current Government has accorded top priority to its commitments under all international agreements and conventions. Our current constitution — which was supported by 79 per cent of Iraqis in a referendum — states that the Iraqi Government must respect and fulfil its commitments under the NPT and prohibits the development, production or use of weapons of mass destruction of any kind. To translate those words into reality, the relevant Iraqi authorities have studied the various agreements and conventions to which we have not yet acceded. As a result, the cabinet has agreed that Iraq should accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and has made recommendations in that regard to parliament, as the competent legislative authority to ratify such agreements. We are now in the process of studying the Model Additional Protocol of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime. My delegation will work with other delegations to sponsor draft resolutions that meet our expectations.

My country has been facing the most brutal forms of terrorism. We are doing our utmost to build a new Iraq that will take its place among civilized nations, having learned the lessons of history. Thus, Iraq, with renewed hope, will serve as an element of stability for its neighbours and for all of humanity.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As we begin our work at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, I should like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee and to assure you of the full support of the Senegalese delegation in carrying out your duties.

Senegal associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States.

I should like to emphasize my country's great concern at the continuing deadlock in the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process. Indeed, the most important disarmament mechanisms — the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — are all at an impasse. Compounding that are the difficulties that were observed in arriving at a consensus outcome document at the 2006 Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

These deadlocks in addressing disarmament issues are occurring at a time when the international

community faces major challenges in the area of maintaining international peace and security, particularly with regard to the risks of tension linked to nuclear proliferation.

The only forum in which it is still possible to engage in discussions and take decisions thus remains the First Committee. Hence the great importance that we attach to our work, in terms of guiding and providing impetus for the disarmament and non-proliferation process, which is now at a standstill. However, we should stress that the success of our deliberations will depend largely on constructive commitment, a spirit of openness and a sense of compromise on the part of delegations.

In that regard, Senegal believes that the following issues are particularly important and should be addressed by the Committee with courage and clear-sightedness.

The first is strengthening the authority of the NPT by ensuring its universalization and supporting its three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses. The conclusion of an arrangement on negative security guarantees could help strengthen the authority of the NPT. Such an arrangement would dissipate the fears of non-nuclear-weapon States and would usher in an era of confidence, which could only be beneficial for the NPT. However, we should not make the mistake of thinking that the NPT alone will enable us to achieve our disarmament and proliferation objectives.

Although it enjoys greater support than any other disarmament treaty, with 188 ratifying States, the NPT needs to be supplemented, on the one hand by the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, on the other hand, by the conclusion of an instrument to cut off the production of fissile materials for military purposes. Due recognition of those two instruments, which relate respectively to the qualitative improvement and the quantitative development of nuclear weapons, would enable the international community to take a decisive step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The attention given to nuclear weapons must not divert our attention from conventional weapons, the control and reduction of which we must figure into our priorities. Here, Senegal is pleased that the 2006 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms — which was established by the Secretary-General and in whose work my country was honoured to participate — succeeded in reaching a satisfactory compromise outcome that will increase transparency and enhance confidence with respect to transfers of conventional arms. The Group, however, has not yet satisfactorily addressed the issue of small arms and light weapons transfers, which remain a major source of concern for the international community and, in particular, for zones of tension, especially in Africa.

Following the failure of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, it seems urgent that additional measures be taken to ensure proper implementation of that instrument, which should also be supplemented quickly by an instrument on the brokering in these weapons.

With regard to chemical and biological weapons, we should ensure that the conventions relating to these issues are made stronger and more universal and that exchanges of information increase. Such exchanges of information would aim to effectively apply these instruments on a global level and to limit the risks of biological and chemical weapons in all their forms.

The world is facing complex security challenges. In order to meet them, we should bear in mind that security must be collective. Hence the need to view it through a global prism, with inclusive and unimpassioned dialogue that will take into account the security concerns of all States. In that way, we will contribute to strengthening multilateralism in the spheres of disarmament and non-proliferation, and at the same time avoid isolated action, always a source of tension and of dispute.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): The Philippines joins other delegations in congratulating you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chair and on having made history in becoming the first woman to preside over the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved elections.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Nobuaki Tanaka for giving us a broader picture of the disarmament and international security environment in the statement he delivered yesterday.

The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

No one would dispute the fact that the proliferation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons poses a serious threat to peace, safety and security, and even to sustained economic growth and development. Developing countries are more vulnerable, because the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons has fuelled armed conflict in some parts of the world, adversely affecting millions.

Like other delegations, we had high hopes during the 2006 Conference to review the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and are thus disappointed that it was unable to reach agreement on a formal outcome document. During the Review Conference last June, the Philippines highlighted four points: international cooperation, the need to promote dialogue and a culture of peace in the implementation of the Programme of Action, the important role of civil society and follow-up mechanisms.

We wish to reiterate those points as we look forward to a new draft resolution that would set a direction for the international community's action on the issue of the prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Such a draft resolution should emphasize the follow-up mechanisms to effectively implement the Programme of Action; these would be addressed by the next review conference.

The Philippines would also like to underscore the important role that civil society plays in our efforts to address the scourge of trafficking in small arms and light weapons through the promotion of a culture of peace. The role of civil society was recognized in several provisions of the Programme of Action. As such, it should have a role in international, subregional and national efforts to implement the Programme.

In particular, the Philippines recognizes the role that faith communities and interfaith cooperation can have in implementing the Programme of Action. We have been actively encouraging faith communities to call on their respective followers to extend their full cooperation in efforts to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We have been actively pursuing and promoting interfaith dialogue among the various faith communities with a view to coming up with a coherent and unified stand on this issue. We believe that the tripartite Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, participated in by 50 Governments, 15 United Nations agencies and 110 religious non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited with the United Nations, can be called upon to extend its support in this regard.

Five months ago, Secretary-General Kofi Annan told his audience in Tokyo that the world was at a crossroads and had to choose between two paths: one that leads to the restriction and reversal of nuclear proliferation and another that leads to a growing number of States feeling obliged to arm themselves with weapons of mass destruction and non-State actors acquiring the means to carry out nuclear terrorism. In his speech, the Secretary-General lamented that the international community appears to be sleepwalking towards the latter direction as a result of what he said are its miscalculations, sterile debates and the paralysis of multilateral mechanisms. Sadly, nothing much has changed since the Secretary-General made that statement.

Things are as complicated as ever with the current deadlock in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Just a year ago, the Philippines expressed its disappointment over the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also joined others in expressing disappointment in the failure of the 2005 World Summit to include a section on disarmament and non-proliferation in its Outcome Document (resolution 60/1). We are likewise disheartened that the credibility of the Disarmament Commission and its capability to fulfil its mandate and advance the disarmament agenda has been put into question, especially when it only made minor changes to its working methods after meeting for three weeks in April.

Despite those frustrating developments, the Philippines is one with the Secretary-General in saying that now is the time to break the current impasse in multilateral negotiations and to bring disarmament back to the international agenda. Urgent progress is needed, and all Member States must muster the political will to achieve the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Philippines recognizes the danger of weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands. The world has seen how far terrorists are

willing to go in wreaking havoc just to deliver their message of hate. We cannot afford to make the mistake of allowing the wholesale murder of innocents through the use of those weapons. We share the concern of other Member States about the threat posed by the trafficking of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons to non-State actors and by their use for terrorist activities. We also share the concern about the lack of measures in existing international law to address the problem.

As an elected member of the Security Council from 2004 to 2005, the Philippines actively participated in the negotiations that led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). As a former Vice-Chairman of the 1540 Committee, the Philippines will actively engage in efforts to strengthen all relevant international initiatives to prevent non-State actors from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. While the Philippines believes that the best way to prevent that from happening is to eliminate such weapons, the problem of proliferation needs to be immediately addressed through creative, dynamic and proactive approaches. Domestic controls, including legislative measures, to prevent the proliferation of such weapons, in particular their transfer for terrorist purposes, could be adopted.

This year, we mark the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The 176 signatures and 135 ratifications by States that have been gathered so far indicate the international community's continued recognition of the important role of the Treaty, not only in bringing an end to a period that has witnessed over 2,000 nuclear test explosions worldwide but also for its contribution to the enhancement of world peace and security.

The Philippines is proud to be among the 17 of the 32 countries from the Asia-Pacific region that has completed the ratification process. As current Chair of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines would like to highlight and welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by Viet Nam, a fellow ASEAN member. This is of particular importance since Viet Nam is one of the States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty. The Philippines reiterates its call on those States that have not signed and/or ratified the Treaty, in particular the 10 remaining annex 2 States, to do so as soon as possible to maintain momentum for the Treaty's early entry into force.

Lastly, Madam Chair, I would like to conclude by once again assuring you of the full support and cooperation of the Philippine delegation as you steer the work of the First Committee to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Let me begin, Madam, by saying how pleased I am to see you, a close friend, chairing the First Committee at this session. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area, but not of the European Union, aligned itself with the statement of the European Union, delivered by the representative of Finland at the commencement of the general debate, but I would like to make some further brief remarks.

For a small country like Iceland, a world where relations among States are governed by the rule of law is of fundamental importance. The international community has developed various ways and means to govern international activity and interaction between States, where the rights and obligations of States are stipulated. Disarmament and arms control treaties and conventions which have been negotiated over recent decades form an integral part of that system.

In recent years, however, and as so many have mentioned in this debate, we have seen setbacks in the multilateral field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We strongly agree with what my colleague from the Philippines said a few minutes ago: that now is the time to break the impasse in multilateral negotiations and to put disarmament back on the international agenda.

Two weeks ago, on 20 September, a Joint Ministerial Statement was adopted to support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on the tenth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature. The Foreign Minister of Iceland was among the ministers who put their names to the statement. Nuclear testing has been regarded as the engine of nuclear proliferation. Ratification of the CTBT is crucial in halting and reversing the reliance on weapons of mass destruction. In spite of strong global aspirations, manifested in 176 signatures and 135 ratifications, the entry into force of that important Treaty has, regrettably, not been achieved. We encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has served as the main pillar in global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Credible and effective verification in order to prevent violations is a key component of the NPT regime.

Iceland supports efforts to find diplomatic solutions to the many questions surrounding Iran's nuclear programme. The Iranian authorities must fully comply with the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for transparency in the development of their nuclear programme.

Iceland expresses its great concern at the announced intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to conduct a nuclear test in the future. We urge the North Korean authorities to reconsider their plan and not to proceed with it.

In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General shares his concern that the international community faces two divergent courses.

> "One path, that of active engagement by all Member States, can take us to a world in which the proliferation of nuclear weapons is restricted and reversed through trust, dialogue and negotiated agreement. The other more dangerous course could lead to a world of fearful instability where such weapons are the currency of international relations and in which non-State actors acquire the means to carry out terrorism with potentially catastrophic consequences." (*A/61/1, para. 94*)

All of us want to make the world a better and safer place. We should all make our contributions to ensure that the former path described by the Secretary-General, is the one that we take.

I would like to highlight the issue of small arms and light weapons. Our understanding of the use and impact of such weapons has increased over the past few years. The toll such weapons take is widespread and complex and threatens the stability of States and the security and well-being of people. Iceland is deeply disappointed that during the past summer we were unable to reach an agreement on the best way forward to tackle the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons.

In line with the need to control the undesirable proliferation of conventional arms, Iceland favours an international treaty to establish common standards for the global trade in conventional arms. We support the initiative of a group of Member States that will, in the course of this session, introduce a draft resolution to establish a group of governmental experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

Iceland attaches great importance to the reform of the United Nations, including improvements in the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. In that context, we subscribe to the view expressed by Japan yesterday, that we simply make sure that we implement resolution 59/95, on improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): It pleases me at the outset, Madam, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to present to you my sincerest congratulations on your election as chairperson of this important Committee. I wish you and all the other members of the Bureau every success. I also take this opportunity to thank your predecessor for his excellent management of the previous session and to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for the valuable information contained in his briefing to the Committee, which reflected the efforts made by the United Nations in addressing the international arms race and the maintenance of international peace and security. I also wish to align my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The serious discussions in this Committee reflect the importance of bringing about a convergence of views and international consensus on disarmament issues, particularly on those that have been the subject of disagreement among Member States in previous years. Such divisiveness led to the failure of international negotiations on the disarmament section of the 2005 World Summit Outcome and to the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Furthermore, the activities of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva are at a stalemate due to an inability to reach consensus on its agenda.

The international arms race in all its forms continues to represent a real and dangerous threat to

the international stability and economic development to which all our peoples aspire. This comes at a time when we have come to realize the seriousness of potential confrontations and the number of dangerous hot spots that could flare up, as well as the possibility that arms could be diverted to irresponsible groups. It is therefore imperative for us, as a priority, to strengthen international cooperation in all areas of disarmament in accordance with the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, and the relevant United Nations conventions and treaties. These instruments do not make distinctions between States and ensure transparency with regard to respect for the national and regional sovereignty and security of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and their legitimate right to self-defence.

We call upon delegations to show the necessary flexibility, political will and sense of responsibility to bring about international consensus on key pending issues on our agenda. We remind States of the obligations they have undertaken under disarmament treaties and protocols. Those principles should be the framework for our negotiations and our common objective concerning non-proliferation issues, regional and international confidence-building measures and other substantive issues. Failure to resolve such issues has hampered the peaceful settlement of many disputes and has slowed the pace of development.

We would also like to emphasize that our discussions on improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee should be objective and help in maintaining the key priorities in addressing the danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and in putting an end to doctrines of nuclear deterrence pursued by some States, particularly in hot spots such as the Middle East, the Arabian Gulf region and South Asia.

The United Arab Emirates takes this opportunity to reaffirm its full commitment to the disarmament treaties and instruments to which it is a party, particularly the NPT, which bans the production of weapons of mass destruction in order to promote confidence-building measures and to strengthen regional and international stability. In this context, the United Arab Emirates calls for self-restraint and balance, and for the resolution of regional conflicts by peaceful means, and deplores the escalation of tension and confrontation. That commonly occurs because of the insistence by some States on retaining their nuclear arsenals or because of attempts by other States to develop, test and possess nuclear weapons.

From this perspective, we reaffirm our support for the right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to encourage technological and scientific exchanges in this area within the limits of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) non-proliferation system. In the meantime, we hope that the ongoing negotiations on the Iranian nuclear question will lead to a lasting and peaceful settlement that ensures the safety and security of the countries of the region and avoids threats or unnecessary confrontations. We also emphasize that the international community must deal with this issue in a transparent manner that ensures the implementation of all relevant resolutions of the United Nations, in particular those of the General Assembly, and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, like those in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, South-East Asia, Africa and, most recently, Central Asia. It is thus imperative for influential States Members of the United Nations to exert pressure on Israel to dismantle its nuclear programme and subject its nuclear facilities to the full-scope safeguards regime of the IAEA. We also call upon all States to abide by the resolution calling for the suspension of all scientific, technological and financial assistance used to develop these facilities, which threaten the peace process in the region and the security and stability of its people.

We reaffirm our support for the proposals calling for the conclusion of a universal, legally binding instrument providing security assurances to non-nuclear States. We also hope that serious negotiations will be initiated among nuclear-weapon States ultimately leading to the fulfilment of their commitments, including the commitment to gradually reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals, particularly their strategic offensive nuclear weapons, within a specific time frame and in accordance with article VI of the NPT. This would enhance the effectiveness, universality and comprehensiveness of the treaties on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and would protect humanity from the risk of genocide.

We also welcome the convening earlier this year of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also welcome the adoption of the binding political International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We hope that all States will take appropriate practical steps to combat the illicit trade in those weapons, which has been shown to prolong conflicts and wars and to threaten the safety, security and prosperity of people everywhere.

In conclusion, I hope this Committee's deliberations will lead to a consensus on strengthening our activities, enabling us to meet the aspirations of our peoples to security, peace, development and regional and international stability.

The Chairperson: Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed today at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at noon.